

Summer 8-2017

## **A Qualitative Study of the Curricula For the Doctor of Education (EdD) Degree In Higher Education Programs**

Rebecca C. Holland  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Holland, Rebecca C., "A Qualitative Study of the Curricula For the Doctor of Education (EdD) Degree In Higher Education Programs" (2017). *Dissertations*. 1425.  
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/1425>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact [aquilastaff@usm.edu](mailto:aquilastaff@usm.edu).

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE CURRICULA FOR THE DOCTOR OF  
EDUCATION (EdD) DEGREE IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by

Rebecca Holland

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Education and Psychology,  
and the Department of Educational Research and Administration  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2017

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE CURRICULA FOR THE DOCTOR OF  
EDUCATION (EdD) DEGREE IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by Rebecca Holland

August 2017

Approved by:

---

Dr. Lilian H. Hill, Committee Chair  
Professor, Educational Research and Administration

---

Dr. Thomas V. O'Brien, Committee Member  
Professor, Educational Research and Administration

---

Dr. R. Eric Platt, Committee Member  
Assistant Professor, Educational Research and Administration

---

Dr. Kyna Shelley, Committee Member  
Professor, Educational Research and Administration

---

Dr. Lilian H. Hill  
Co-Chair, Department of Educational Research and Administration

---

Dr. Karen S. Coats  
Dean of the Graduate School

COPYRIGHT BY

Rebecca Holland

2017

*Published by the Graduate School*



## ABSTRACT

### A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE CURRICULA FOR THE DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD) DEGREE IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by Rebecca Holland

August 2017

Using the Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate (CPED) as a model curricular framework, this study sought to determine the structures and functions of well-run and respected non-CPED participating higher education administration EdD curricula. The qualitative approach was used during two iterations of focus groups to learn the professional opinions and knowledge of nine full-time doctorally-prepared faculty members (also serving as administrators) of higher education administration EdD programs across the nation.

Focus group data was interpreted by framing the emerging ideas and relating these ideas to Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researcher then compared the CPED model curricular framework, particularly the six guiding principles, with the curricula from participants' institutions. The researcher learned that regardless of participants' levels of knowledge regarding the CPED prior to the study, their higher education administration EdD curricula were closely aligned with the CPED model framework. Moreover, participants agreed more collaborative efforts are needed to further assess and revise EdD curricula, making certain the needs of the students are indeed being met, and the future of higher education administration will be positive.

Implications and recommendations for additional curricular work and research, both pertaining specifically to the EdD in higher education administration, are included within the summary of this study.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my dissertation committee members for their guidance and support throughout this journey. Dr. Lilian Hill, my committee chair and mentor, has continuously guided this process through formal instruction, lengthy conversations and explanations, patience, understanding, but most of all, her never ceasing encouragement. Both Drs. Hill and R. Eric Platt have spent numerous hours talking me through processes, editing my work, and providing feedback, repeatedly. Thank you two for always reassuring me in both my ideas and writing, as well as providing me exceptional examples through your own research, writings, and publications. Dr. Platt, thank you for always responding quickly, sharing your dissertation writing experiences, and making me laugh when it was most needed. To my other two committee members, Drs. Thomas V. O'Brien and Kyna Shelley, I appreciate your thoughtful and important contributions to this project, as your instruction, ideas, and questions regarding my work have aided me tremendously in better understanding both the history of higher education as well as the research process.

Another special person I would like to thank is Dr. Ray G. Newman. You are the most amazing boss, mentor, and friend anyone could ever hope to have, and I will forever be indebted to you for your encouragement and the trust you have placed in me as I continuously work to become a better educator and mentor. I would also like to recognize and thank Ms. Jennifer Downey, my dearest friend, colleague, and editor, who is literally a miracle worker.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. To my husband John, two daughters, Sarah Campbell Holland and Mary Harper Grey Holland, and mother Jan Campbell, I will never be able to adequately express my gratitude, love, and appreciation for your many years of support and understanding. And while he was not able to be here to support me during my graduate education and dissertation writing, I especially dedicate this work to my late father, Peter L. Campbell, Jr., for instilling in me the importance of, and a genuine love for, education.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Research Questions.....	10
Study Design and Theoretical Framework .....	10
Justification.....	13
Assumptions.....	13
Delimitations.....	14
Definition of Terms.....	14
Summary.....	17
CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE .....	19
History and Purpose of the PhD and EdD .....	21
Differentiation of the PhD and EdD .....	23
Critiques of the PhD and EdD .....	28
Need for and Credibility of the EdD.....	30
Theoretical Framework.....	31

Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) .....	38
Summary .....	43
CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY .....	45
Overview .....	45
Procedures .....	45
Participant Recruitment .....	47
Introduction of Discussion Topic.....	49
Online Data Collection Methods .....	50
Focus Group Facilitation.....	50
Participant Anonymity .....	51
Delphi Technique.....	51
Collection and Analysis of Data .....	54
Iterations of the Qualitative Instrument .....	55
Phase I—Iteration I.....	55
Phase I—Iteration II.....	56
Phase II—Comparison of Curricula to the CPED Framework.....	57
Ethical Considerations and Research Permission .....	58
Summary .....	59
CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS .....	60
Overview .....	60

Participation .....	61
Phase I—Iteration I.....	62
Curricular Distinctions.....	63
Research Methods and Research Product.....	66
CPED Influence on Participants’ Curricula.....	71
Improving the EdD Reputation.....	72
Phase I—Iteration II.....	75
Effect of Participants’ Education on Program Curricula .....	76
Effect of Participants’ Colleagues’ Education on EdD Curricula .....	79
Effect of Program Faculty’s Education on the EdD .....	80
Institutional Reasons for Offering the Higher Education Administration EdD.....	83
Resources Used When Considering Curricular Revisions.....	84
Phase II—Comparison of Curricula to the CPED Framework.....	86
CPED Guiding Principle 1: Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice .....	89
CPED Guiding Principle 2: Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.....	90

CPED Guiding Principle 3: Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships .....	91
CPED Guiding Principle 4: Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions.....	93
CPED Guiding Principle 5: Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge, that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry .....	94
CPED Guiding Principle 6: Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice .....	94
Summary .....	94
CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION.....	97
Summary of the Study .....	97
General Overview of Findings.....	98
Research Question 1 .....	102
Research Question 2 .....	103
Research Question 3 .....	105
Summary .....	105
Conclusions.....	106
Implications.....	107

Recommendation for Future Research.....	109
APPENDIX A – Institutional Review Board Approval .....	111
APPENDIX B – Invitation To Participate In Focus Groups .....	112
APPENDIX C – CPED Framework for EdD Redesign.....	113
APPENDIX D – Focus Group Questions Iteration One.....	116
REFERENCES .....	117

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 A Chronology of the EdD (Perry, 2012) ..... 26

Table 2 Demographic Descriptors of the Participants ..... 48

Table 3 Educational background of focus group participants ..... 77

Table 4 A comparison of CPED guiding principles and participants' programs' curricula.  
..... 87

## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

In the past 50 years, the characteristics of doctoral students in the United States have changed significantly (Archbald, 2011; Gardner, 2009; Offerman, 2011; Perry, 2012; Thelin, 2011; West, Gokalp, Peña, Fischer, & Gupton, 2011). In 2014, the total number of research doctoral degrees awarded in the US was at an all-time high with 54,070 doctorates conferred, the highest number of doctoral degrees awarded in a single year during the 58 years in which the Survey of the Earned Doctorate (SED) has been administered (National Science Foundation, 2015). In spite of the rising number of doctoral students, the number of traditional graduate students, identified here as attending school full-time, and working part-time or less, is dwindling. In response to societal pressures, the demographic characteristics of today's doctoral students have shifted toward those who are full-time employees, have spouses or partners, are parents, and oftentimes are the caregivers to elderly parents. As a result, half of all doctoral students attend school on a part-time basis (Gardner, 2009; Kuipers, 2011).

While strong in number, these nontraditional students often experience barriers to success in their pursuit of a doctoral degree (Kuipers, 2011; West et al., 2011). Many nontraditional doctoral students who work full-time, regardless of field of study, face barriers to pursuing higher education due to their inability to attend classes during normal school hours and be available for frequent interactions with program advisors and faculty to acculturate to the academy (Archbald, 2011; Barnes & Austin, 2009; Gardner, 2009; O'Callaghan, 2011; Offerman, 2011; West et al., 2011). While doctoral student demographics are changing, there has been little change in doctoral degree program curricula to better meet the needs of the students, as well as the priorities of their

employers. This has resulted in both potential and current nontraditional doctoral students becoming frustrated and discouraged because of the limited number of programs designed specifically to meet their demographic needs.

Of the doctoral students in education-related fields, nontraditional students outnumber the traditional doctoral student population (Archbald, 2011; Offerman, 2011) and experience the same barriers to success as other nontraditional doctoral students (Kuipers, 2011; West et al., 2011). Based on this background, the curricula for Doctor of Education (EdD) degree programs, specifically those with an emphasis in higher education administration, and how those programs address the needs of nontraditional students and changing societal pressures was in part the focus of this research study.

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) does not distinguish between the EdD and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or full-time versus part-time students (2015). However, the NSF considers that all doctoral degrees included in the SED are research-based (2015). Further examination of the literature, including numbers provided through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), verifies that more statistical information exists pertaining to the education-related PhD (only), or possibly the EdD and education-related PhD combined; however, there continues to be very little information specific to the EdD (NCES, 2016; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993).

In addition to a need for more statistical information about EdD programs in the US, a comparison of emphasis-specific EdD and PhD programs may be informative, given the shifting demographics of doctoral students and the response of some doctoral programs to these shifts. For example, some EdD programs (as well as many PhD-



Education programs), in response to the nontraditional student's needs, have reworked the logistics of their program to allow those previously unable to pursue a doctoral degree to enroll and matriculate in more flexibly formatted programs (Archbald, 2011; Offerman, 2011; Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006; West et al., 2011; Zambo, 2011).

As the number of traditional doctoral students declines, the traditional PhD degree, with its emphasis on original research (later defined and discussed in this chapter) and oftentimes designed for and requiring full-time enrollment, may no longer be appropriate or even desirable for many potential doctoral students in education-related fields of study (Archbald, 2011; Offerman, 2011; Perry, 2012). For instance, the PhD may be unsuitable for potential students who are already practitioners in their chosen field, have no plans to conduct original scholarly research, or have no plans to teach at the collegiate level (Archbald, 2011; Gardner & Shulman, 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2012; Kuipers, 2011; Offerman, 2011; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Redden, 2007; West et al., 2011; Zambo, 2010). These potential students seek a degree that will better equip them to solve problems in the current educational system. For those students working toward a doctoral degree in education for problem solving, rather than producing original scholarly work, the EdD, using methods of applied or action research, might be a better fit than a PhD in higher education administration (Redden, 2007; Shulman et al., 2006; Zambo, 2011). These practitioner students may find both the purpose and result of applied research more applicable to the real-life ethical, legal, and financial problems they will encounter and be responsible for solving in their professions.

As other doctoral degrees specific to particular professional fields of study (e.g., MD, DO, JD, DrPH) emerged, the EdD was originally conceptualized as the research doctorate for education, with the intent of breaking away from arts and sciences (Perry, 2012; Purinton, 2012; West et al., 2011; Wergin, 2011). Since its beginnings, however, the EdD was never clearly defined. For example, some schools of education created EdD programs specifically to offer a research-intensive degree in education, while other institutions intended the EdD to serve solely as a professional doctoral degree (Offerman, 2011; Perry, 2012). Adding more confusion to its purpose, the first EdD programs were often taught by PhD faculty from the sciences and arts, with a curriculum and dissertation similar to that of the PhD (Perry, 2012). This lack of a clear purpose continued, and over time, the belief that the EdD was strictly a professional doctorate, suited only for practitioners and/or those disinterested in scholarly research prevailed (Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Perry, 2012).

In addition to the sometimes-held belief that the EdD is not a scholarly research degree, many potential students seeking an education doctorate were limited in their options because of employment, oftentimes full-time, and other responsibilities (Offerman, 2011; Perry, 2012; West et al., 2011). In order to accommodate these potential students, institutions saw the need and importance of reworking the logistics of many doctoral programs, particularly the EdD (Archbald, 2011; Offerman, 2011; Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006; West et al., 2011; Zambo, 2011).

Some educational critics argue that practitioner doctoral degrees, such as the EdD, often come with an associated stigma that these degree programs lack rigor in terms of coursework and dissertation requirements, and are often considered to be less prestigious

than the PhD (Basu, 2012; Carlson & Mitchell, 2011; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Perry, 2012; Redden, 2007). In contrast, the literature states that comparisons of curricula for these two degree programs reveal there are commonly more similarities than differences (Basu, 2012; Carlson & Mitchell, 2011; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Redden, 2007). To clearly understand the distinctions between the PhD and EdD, it is important to know how and why these doctoral degree programs were created.

#### Preliminary History and Structure of the PhD and EdD

Originating in Germany during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the PhD was the product of combined research and philosophy in which scholars advanced current knowledge through their work (Baez, 2002). The first PhD in the United States was awarded in 1861 at Yale University (Baez, 2002). However, the first PhD in education was awarded in 1893, at Columbia University's Teachers College (Perry, 2012; Shulman et al., 2006). A more detailed history of the PhD, on which chapter two will elaborate, explains the design was fashioned so students could begin their scholarly research through immersion in the literature in order to become familiar with what was already known in a particular field of study. After achieving this objective, PhD students then searched for what is unknown, or has not been addressed, based on the literature. It is the unknown that PhD students investigate, in order to make contributions to the field (Archbald, 2011; Gardner, 2009; Offerman, 2011; Wergin, 2011). Students in the social sciences typically did this by employing theoretical frameworks and research methodologies to aid in the formation of new knowledge or the expansion of current theories regarding a specific topic. The PhD was intended to be a research-based degree that students pursued with the intent of

ultimately becoming scholars and contributing to a current field of knowledge (Archbald, 2011; Gardner, 2009; Offerman, 2011).

Much different from the PhD, the concept prompting the establishment of the EdD was a response to academicians in social sciences by instructors, practitioners, and professionals in the field of education, who recognized the need for doctorally-prepared individuals qualified to both solve problems in the current educational system as well as aid in preparing future educators for similar roles (Archbald, 2011; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; West et al., 2011). In contrast to the PhD, the EdD was originally designed to meet the educational needs of those who were practitioners, or already holding mid- to high-ranking professional positions in the field of education, but for whom a terminal degree became a requirement for continued employment or advancement. Put another way, the EdD was a credential that professionals needed to keep their jobs. The first EdD was awarded in 1920 at Harvard University (Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Perry, 2012; Shulman et al., 2006). True to the original intent of the EdD, the Harvard EdD was not originally designed for those intending to pursue tenure-track faculty positions with an emphasis in conducting original scholarly-based research (Basu, 2012; Gardner, 2009; Jackson & Kelley, 2002).

In keeping with its original intent, EdD programs offered a degree that did not always teach students to perform theory-based scholarly research. For example, EdD students are commonly taught and encouraged to conduct research based on existing real-life practice problems with the goal of solving them. This type of study is often referred to as applied research, action research, practitioner research, or problem-based learning (Gardner, 2009; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Jarvis, 1999; Offerman, 2011). EdD students

conducting research of this type begin the process by identifying an actual problem, and through research, conclude their study with a solution or method for solving the problem (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Offerman, 2011). Wergin (2011) argues that:

the EdD is thus, in theory, intended to be the terminal practice degree for educators in the same way that an MD is the terminal practice degree for physicians, the DDS is for dentists, and the JD is for lawyers. Holders of an EdD degree are expected to be able to use existing knowledge to solve educational problems, and thus like the holders of other professional degrees, to situate their position in practice (p. 120).

This difference, as well as offering a program that aimed to credential professionals so they might keep their jobs, have caused the EdD to be both respected and disparaged by instructors and other professionals in education.

Although literature indicates the EdD and PhD in education are viewed differently in terms of rigor, prestige, and purpose, the actual differences in the overall curricula are oftentimes insignificant, at best (Basu, 2012; Carlson & Mitchell, 2011; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Redden, 2007; Wergin, 2011)). This has resulted in many colleges and universities continuing to offer EdD programs that mirror PhD programs. Critics argue that the consequence of this has been a generation of ill-prepared education practitioners serving in leadership and administrative capacities in today's education system (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Redden, 2007).

Furthermore, there are few suggestions for an EdD program design that would produce the highest level of doctorally-prepared graduates, while also meeting the needs

of the nontraditional student population and the priorities of their employers (Archbald, 2011; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Offerman, 2011).

#### Statement of the Problem

As previously mentioned, the EdD is noted in the literature as being a lesser degree by many scholars, and therefore producing inferior graduates, when compared to the PhD (Basu, 2012; Carlson & Mitchell, 2011; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Redden, 2007). However, when studying the current state of America's educational system, researchers continue to identify a need for more professionally prepared instructors and administrators in the field of education (as a whole) who are qualified to study and resolve current practical educational issues (Jackson & Kelley, 2012; Nelson & Coorough, 1994). Conversely, the PhD in most education-related fields of study, often focuses more heavily on conducting original research. For those who do not intend to conduct original scholarly research, or become tenure-track faculty members, the true need is sufficient preparation of practitioners with necessary skills for becoming successful administrators (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Redden, 2007; Wergin, 2011)). Such knowledge and skills include leadership, administration, curriculum and instruction, as well as positively affecting educational policy (Baez, 2002; Perry, 2012; Townsend, 2002). By carefully studying the purpose of the EdD specifically, through efforts such as the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), curricular deficiencies in the EdD as well as positive changes designed to accommodate the growing nontraditional student population's needs, will continue to be identified (Perry, 2012; Purinton, 2012; Redden, 2007).

While the CPED focuses on both higher education administration EdD programs as well as K-12 EdD programs, this study limited its investigation to the EdD degree with an emphasis in higher education administration. Findings of this study can lead to discussions, recommendations, improvements, and ultimately, greater differentiation between the EdD and PhD degree programs in higher education administration, as well as their respective requirements. Furthermore, this effort may also appropriately and adequately aid in preparing graduates who will work toward improving all areas of America's education system.

Until recently, there was no credible framework or model to serve as a guide/starting point for scholarly discussion of the comparisons of the two degrees. The CPED was founded in 2007 for committing "resources to work together to undertake a critical examination of the EdD through dialog, experimentation, critical feedback and evaluation" (CPED, 2016, "About Us," para. 1; CPED, 2016, "History of CPED," para. 1; Perry, 2012). The purpose of this study was to use the CPED framework to identify differences in EdD curricula in higher education administration programs across the country. By exploring this topic with instructors of non-CPED EdD programs in higher education, the researcher uncovered the differences and similarities in mission, approach, and curricula among non-CPED EdD programs in higher education. This exploration can serve to inform those colleges and universities currently offering, creating, or wishing to better differentiate their EdD curricula in higher education administration from PhD programs.

## Research Questions

This research study sought to answer the following questions by conducting focus groups with participants meeting inclusion criteria (i.e., full-time doctoral-level instructors with EdD or PhD degrees teaching in non-CPED EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration):

1. According to participants whose programs are not participating in the CPED, what are the necessary structures and functions of well-run and respected CPED model EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?
2. How does a sample of existing EdD program curricula in higher education administration, not participating in the CPED, compare to the CPED curricular framework, including the identification of overlapping materials?
3. As compared to the CPED curricular framework, what are the recurring areas needing improvement, based on a sample of existing non-CPED participating EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?

## Study Design and Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted using a qualitative method, specifically focus groups, guided by Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations. The qualitative method used borrows elements from the Delphi technique, which operates on the premise that group opinion, in the form of a panel of knowledgeable and experienced participants, is more valid than the results obtained through individual opinion (Keeney et al., 2011; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Stitt-Gohdes & Crews, 2004). This method encourages communication and participant consensus by employing a series of focus groups, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, questionnaires via email correspondence, or



electronically administered questionnaires. This study used focus groups of doctorally-prepared instructors who teach in non-CPED programs that offer the EdD in higher education administration.

Because participants were located throughout the country at various institutions of higher learning, this study employed a series of focus groups conducted and recorded electronically via Zoom. Literature regarding the Delphi technique, from which properties were borrowed to conduct this study, asserts the research process is adjustable, based on the information gleaned during data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). Information collected during this study's first focus group helped to determine the changes and additional questions crafted for the second focus group.

Data collected from all focus groups were coded and analyzed to determine common themes and beliefs regarding functions, structures, components, and initiatives necessary to improve the curriculum for the EdD in higher education administration. In addition to determining themes, answers were also ranked during the analysis process.

Additionally, by using a video-based focus group method, participants' responses were automatically saved and stored, making retrieval, transcribing, organization, and analysis of this information more practical. Video recordings of the focus groups were saved on a password-protected computer until transcriptions were complete. A backup copy of the recorded focus groups was stored on an external hard-drive and stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office.

Complementing this qualitative method, Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations provided the framework for the study design. Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) systematic and innovative model for framing and incorporating organizational

change is both appropriate for and applicable to an exploration of the EdD in higher education administration. Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations operates on the premise that decision-making is based on the consensus of the participants' responses. By being encouraged to reflect on and compare their non-CPED EdD programs in higher education administration with the CPED curricula framework, the participants were led towards "systems thinking" that further led to the identification of "mental models" that prevented positive change. Through their "personal mastery" in the field, participants had a true understanding of existing curricular and cultural issues that have continued to be barriers to improvement, as well as suggestions and methods for improving the areas identified, within the EdD in higher education administration degree, as deficient. As representatives of their respective degree programs, the focus group participants' exchanges resulted in "team learning" and a "shared vision" that have the potential to continuously improve and shape the future of EdD in higher education administration degree programs by using history and current experiences to help form that future.

In accordance with Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, study participants were selected based on their teaching experience in and knowledge of EdD programming in higher education administration. Adhering to the guidance of Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, the number of focus groups needed was determined by the results of the information collected during each iteration, specifically including the level of detail. Participants were asked to discuss and identify structures and functions of well-run EdD programs, based on the CPED curricular framework. Lastly, the researcher compared existing EdD programs with an emphasis in higher

education administration to the CPED framework to further identify recurring areas needing improvement.

#### Justification

By conducting focus groups with doctorally-prepared instructors currently teaching in non-CPED participating higher education administration EdD programs, this study sought to reveal characteristics of the preferred curricula for EdD programs in higher education administration not currently recognized or included in the CPED curricular framework. The knowledge gained from this proposed study may complement current and future studies, including the CPED's ongoing efforts. The CPED, now collaborating with over 80 institutions of higher education in an effort to improve all aspects of the EdD, has made headway in fostering institutional relationships and encouraging communication and other efforts for strengthening the credibility of the EdD (CPED, 2016, "About Us;" Perry, 2012).

#### Assumptions

1. By using a qualitative method, which includes participant quasi-anonymity in which last names and institutions will not be identified during focus groups, the results are more likely to be a consensus, and participants with dominant personalities will not dictate the direction of the research study.
2. This research study will produce more accurate information regarding instructors' opinions of the EdD in higher education administration curricula.
3. Results of group opinion, in which participants are instructors in the field of study, are more dependable than individual opinion.

### Delimitations

For the purposes of this study, the following delimitations were recognized:

1. Findings from this study may produce dependable information regarding instructors' opinions of EdD in higher education administration curricula in the form of a consensus; however, the result will not necessarily constitute a right or wrong answer.
2. Research study participants were limited to doctorally-prepared instructors in EdD higher education administration programs.
3. Model curricula were delimited to EdD programs in higher education administration.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terminology was used, based on these definitions:

*Doctor of Education (EdD)* – The EdD, in this instance, focused on the degree offered in the field of higher education administration. The EdD is most often a degree in which students combine the efforts of their coursework, new knowledge gained, and work experience, comprised of current and past knowledge. Most EdD degrees are noted as having an applied research component, in which students take an existing problem in practice and use various research methods with the goal of solving the problem (Archbald, 2011; Gardner, 2009; Nelson & Coorough, 1994).

*Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education* – The PhD in education is most often a research degree, in education fields, comprised of the following three components, comparative with other research areas within the social sciences: coursework, comprehensive examinations, and a dissertation, or a product of the student's independent research. Student research is conducted by identifying a gap in the

literature, and employing theoretical frameworks to guide the study, along with research methods, that aid in determining the effect or result of the study (Archbald, 2011; Gardner, 2009).

*Delphi technique* – The Delphi technique is a research method that encourages a consensus response, rather than individual opinions. Rather than a random sample of individuals from the respective population, this technique employs a panel of instructors in EdD programs, as they are knowledgeable of the higher education administration program curricula. Some researchers argue the results are more valid, compared to individual opinion. Panel participation is generally anonymous or quasi-anonymous, specifically for the purpose of avoiding dominant personalities and opinions, which have a tendency to lead in decision-making efforts (Keeney, Hasson, McKenna, 2011).

*Scholarly practitioner* – For the purposes of this study, scholarly practitioners blend practical wisdom with skills and knowledge to solve problems of practice. They use practical research and applied theories as tools for change because they understand the importance of equity and social justice. They disseminate their work in multiple ways, and they have an obligation to resolve problems of practice by collaborating with key stakeholders, including the university, the educational institution, the community, and individuals. (CPED, 2016, “Framework,” para. 8)

*Dissertation in Practice* – According to the CPED (2016), “dissertation in practice is a scholarly endeavor that impacts a complete problem of practice” (“About Us,” para. 13).

*Inquiry as Practice* – Defined by the CPED (2016), Inquiry as Practice is the process of posing significant questions that focus on complete problems of practice. By

using various research, theories, and professional wisdom, scholarly practitioners design innovative solutions to address the problems of practice. At the center of Inquiry as Practice is the ability to use data to understand the effects of innovation. As such, Inquiry of Practice requires the ability to gather, organize, judge, aggregate, and analyze situations, literature, and data with a critical lens (“About Us,” para. 11).

*Non-traditional student* – For the purposes of this study, a non-traditional student was defined as students of diverse racial backgrounds; encompassing both women and men; generally 30 years of age or older; oftentimes enrolled in courses on a part-time basis; pursuing a graduate degree for numerous reasons, including but not limited to continued employment, career advancement and increasing knowledge; sometimes married with children, lives off-campus, has a full-time career; and their continued education is largely self-funded (Archbald, 2011; Gardner, 2009; Kuipers, 2011; Offerman, 2011).

*Laboratories of Practice* – The CPED (2016) defines laboratories of practice as ...settings where theory and practice inform and enrich each other. They address complex problems of practice where ideas—formed by the intersection of theory, inquiry, and practice—can be implemented, measured, and analyzed for the most impact made. Laboratories of Practice facilitate transformative and generative learning that is measured by the development of scholarly expertise and implementation of practice. (para. 12)

*Problem of Practice* – According to the CPED (2016), a problem of practice is “a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue” the addressing of which “has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience, and outcomes” (“About US,” para. 14).

*Professions* – For the purposes of this study, the term professions referred to those given a certain amount of stature, status, or respect for providing societal services (Gardner, & Shulman, 2005).

*Quasi-anonymous* – For the purposes of this study, quasi-anonymous referred to instructor focus group participants and their lack of knowledge regarding the other participants. Participants' last names, as well as institution and program names, were not discussed during the focus group sessions. The purpose of the participants remaining quasi-anonymous was that the possibility of peer influence and intimidation was minimalized, providing a more comfortable experience in which participants were more at ease and willing to provide both detailed and honest answers.

*Signature pedagogy* – Defined by the CPED, signature pedagogy explains that: (1) teaching is deliberate, pervasive and persistent. It challenges assumptions, engages in action, and requires ongoing assessment and accountability. (2) Teaching and learning are grounded in theory, research, and in problems of practice. It leads to habits of mind, hand, and heart that can and will be applied to authentic professional settings. (3) Teaching helps students develop a critical and professional stance with a moral and ethical imperative for equity and social justice (2016, "About US," para. 10.)

### Summary

For decades, critics have both praised and disparaged the EdD. However, until recently, little action has been taken to improve the rigor, reputation, purpose, or distinctiveness of this doctoral degree (Perry, 2012; Shulman et al., 2006). Even with the presence and movement set forth by the CPED to reinvent the EdD, instructors of non-

CPED participating EdD programs in higher education administration remain divided regarding their beliefs on whether the EdD is a necessary element of today's higher educational landscape. By working directly with doctorally-prepared instructors teaching in EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration, this study sought to answer questions regarding the awareness of the CPED framework, progress made thus far in the overall reinventing of the EdD, as well as additional areas identified for improvement. This study sought to further explain how EdD curricula should differ from the PhD, highlighting a clearer overall purpose for both degree programs. The thought was that by creating greater awareness of the CPED curricular framework, particularly by instructors in EdD higher education administration programs, the identified gaps and suggestions may further aid in the efforts to reinvent the EdD, as well as differentiate the EdD curriculum from that of the PhD. Findings from this study may be useful in informing future research.

In chapter two, a relevant review of the literature is provided, including an explanation of Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, which was used to frame this research study. Chapter three provides detail regarding the methodology and technique the researcher employed to conduct the study.



## CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

### Overview

Since the inception of the EdD degree, some scholars have questioned the necessity, quality, rigor, and credibility of a practitioner-based degree with little or no emphasis on original research (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Redden, 2007; Townsend, 2002). The first EdD was established and conferred by Harvard University in 1920 (Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Townsend, 2002). Nearly a century later, leaders of the academy remain dissatisfied with the management of many aspects of the EdD, such as lax conditions for program entry, lack of curricular rigor, and less than challenging dissertation requirements (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Redden, 2007). Additionally, both the acceptance process and requirements, as well as EdD curricular design, continue to be inconsistent across universities and programs, as there is no national standard or accrediting body to ensure stability of these programs (Wergin, 2011). While many scholars disapprove of offering the EdD in place of, or in addition to, the PhD, others recognize that over time, many EdD programs have begun to mirror the requirements and curricular design of the PhD (Basu, 2012; Nelson & Coorough, 1994).

Gardner and Shulman (2005) note that as professions continue to evolve, so do the educational requirements necessary for successful performance in these professions; therefore, higher education, encompassing all levels, including doctoral degrees, must be further developed in order to also move forward. In agreement with Gardner and Shulman (2005), Perry (2012) adds that while many fields of doctoral education fit an inflexible, lock-step curricular model, this is not the case with many EdD programs. Others that value the EdD suggest the benefits of either reinventing the degree altogether

or even creating a new education-related doctoral degree in addition to the PhD and EdD (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988; Goodlad, 1990; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Wergin, 2011).

Wergin (2011) argues that a rebooted EdD be established, framed around the following four principles:

Education at all levels has an emancipating, rather than indoctrinating, function and thus is a powerful tool for social change; (2) doctoral-level expertise in education is useful for all professionals with significant pedagogical responsibilities, not just those in school settings; (3) an EdD is distinguished from a master's degree by its emphasis on continued *scholarship into* professional practice, not just *proficiency in* practice; and (4) the EdD is not an off-shoot or a modification of the PhD but, rather, a course of study having distinct purposes and learning outcomes, culminating in a capstone assessment that reflects practical experience (p.121).

These principles are not altogether unlike those set forth by the CPED, which are discussed later in further detail. Another suggestion is that the EdD be revised and reinvented as the professional practice doctorate, or PPD (Shulman et al., 2006).

Goodlad (1990) argues that by creating the degree, Doctor of Pedagogy, or the DPED, the current confusion between the purpose and outcome of the PhD and EdD in higher education administration would be eliminated. Others suggest that it is more appropriate to revise the EdD, making it a master's degree somewhat like the current Master of Business Administration (MBA) (Levine, 2005; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993). Moreover, others claim the EdD has little value at all and often recommend doing away with the degree program altogether (Basu, 2012).

## History and Purpose of the PhD and EdD

Historically, European universities were the source of doctoral education, specifically the doctor of philosophy (PhD), and served as the model for prominent American leaders who were instrumental in establishing America's first colleges and universities in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Archbald, 2011; Offerman, 2011; Thelin, 2011). However, because America's first institutions of higher education offered the baccalaureate only, those pursuing a doctoral degree had no choice but to travel abroad to study at European colleges and universities that offered doctoral-level education.

It was not until the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that American doctoral degree-granting institutions began to surface. These American institutions were modeled after German doctoral degree-granting universities, particularly because of their emphasis on theory and rigorous research (Archbald, 2011; Baez, 2002; Offerman, 2011; Thelin, 2011). Moreover, American doctoral degree-granting institutions focused on teaching and preparing students to serve as future higher education faculty. The format for this preparation was originally conceptualized to specifically include coursework, comprehensive examinations, and ultimately a thesis or dissertation, which was the product of each doctoral student's independent research (Gardner, 2009; Offerman, 2011).

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, traditional doctoral degree-granting institutions and programs were well established. These doctor of philosophy programs required students to be enrolled full-time in courses and live either on or near campus. Any attempt to offset the expense of obtaining the doctoral degree was generally through part-time work on campus, such as an assistantship, in which doctoral students worked for faculty in

either research or teaching capacities (Archbald, 2011; Offerman, 2011). During the last century, institutions granting doctor of philosophy degrees in this traditional format have tended to deviate very little in program delivery and the expectation that their students commit to earning the doctoral degree through full-time enrollment, and working no more than part-time, if at all, during the course of their studies (Archbald, 2011; Thelin, 2011).

Today, doctor of philosophy programs nationwide recognize that students studying higher education do not follow the same paths as students in other disciplines, namely the arts and sciences (Perry, 2012; Shulman et al, 2006; Townsend, 2002). Shulman et al. (2006) explains that the vast majority of doctor of philosophy students in education generally do not begin their coursework until a decade or more after completing a baccalaureate; whereas, students in other fields of study, again such as the arts and sciences, generally begin their PhD studies within two years of completing the undergraduate degree. Moreover, the average age of doctoral students in education is 43; while PhD students in other disciplines often begin at a younger age (Shulman, et al., 2006).

The original concept prompting the establishment of the EdD was to create a practitioner's credential or certificate, which quickly evolved into the education doctoral degree (Nelson & Coorough, 1994). The creation of the first EdD degree, in 1920 at Harvard University, originated as a response to practitioners, or professionals in the field of education, who wanted to earn a doctoral degree specifically related to the practical study of problems in an increasingly complex system of formal education (Archbald, 2011; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Offerman, 2011; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Shulman,

et al., 2006; Wergin, 2011). Besides differentiation by title, the EdD was designed to serve as an appealing alternative credential to the PhD for education practitioners focused on advancing within the field from mid- to high-level practitioner job positions, such as teaching in the classroom, to administrative and leadership roles within the higher education system (Archbald, 2011; Basu, 2012; Offerman, 2011; Shulman et al., 2006). During this time, there was little variation in emphasis area for the EdD in education, as it was a broader degree program encompassing multiple areas of specialty.

#### Differentiation of the PhD and EdD

The PhD, in most social science disciplines, is designed so that students begin their scholarly research through immersion in the literature, to become familiar with what is already known in a specific field of study (Boyer, 1990; Gardner, 2009; Offerman, 2011). PhD students are encouraged to then search for what is yet unknown by identifying gaps in the literature. It is the unknown in the literature that PhD students study, in order to make contributions to the field. Employing theoretical frameworks in research studies further aids in the formation of new, and use of existing, research findings, ultimately resulting in informed decisions or expansion of current theories regarding a specific topic.

Established in 1920, Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, under the administration of university president Abbott Lawrence Lowell, established the nation's original EdD, which was first conferred in 1920 (Harvard University, 2017, "Historical Facts"). Prior to the establishment of the EdD, Harvard awarded doctoral degrees in education through the School of Liberal Arts (Powell, 1980). The literature indicates the premise behind Harvard's establishment of the EdD was to have a doctoral

degree title that differed from the doctor of philosophy in sciences and arts, the PhD (Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Perry, 2012; Townsend, 2002). In contrast to the PhD, West et al. (2011) posit that Harvard's EdD was awarded specifically to those "students seeking a prestigious degree reflecting their leadership skills as practitioners" (p. 310). Also in contrast to the PhD, EdD programs do not always teach students research methods based solely on theory (Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Perry, 2012; Townsend, 2002; Jarvis, 1999; Wergin, 2011). For example, EdD students are oftentimes taught and encouraged to conduct research based on existing real-life problems, with the goal of solving them. This type of in-depth academic study is frequently referred to as applied or action research (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Jackson & Kelley, 2002). EdD students conducting research of this type begin the process by identifying an actual problem, and through research, conclude their study by proposing a solution or testing a method for solving the problem. Jarvis (1999) took this research concept one step further when he explained that research and practice go hand in hand, as do practice and reflection. Additionally, he incorporated Freire's (1985) thoughts that, "the act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to new action." Like research conducted in PhD programs, applied research projects may also be crafted around theory. However, Jarvis (2009) wants researchers to continue testing these theories developed during applied research, so that the learning process may be further advanced.

Moreover, applied research commonly occurs on the school, community, and state levels, in which student researchers attempt to improve some educational flaw that will positively impact the local public, ultimately providing a better educational

experience for those they serve (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). While enthusiastic and encouraging of this type research, Argyris Schön (1974) assert that “integrating thought with action effectively has plagued philosophers, frustrated social scientists, and eluded professional practitioners for years” (p. 1). Olson and Clark (2009) assert that an additional frustration and continuous problem is the design of the EdD, or “how to organize pedagogy so that it is meaningful and practical for teachers, administrators, and other leaders who are working in the field while they are completing their doctoral degree requirements” (p. 216).

Similarities in the PhD and EdD in many fields of study, including higher education administration, include the completion of a required number of coursework hours (varying by degree program and college/university requirements), examinations that are usually comprehensive in nature, and the successful defense of a dissertation, or what is sometimes referred to as a capstone project in EdD programs (Nelson & Coorough, 1994). Additionally, the PhD and EdD both require successful completion of core and elective courses, as well as courses in research design.

Table 1 presents a chronology of the development and evolution of the EdD, with brief notations of the institutions’ objective in providing the degree program and the resulting outcomes. This table also provides telling comparisons between the PhD in education and the EdD. This chronology illustrates the growth of the EdD program in both higher education administration and educational leadership (K-12) from 1893 until 2012, as well as some information on PhD programs (Perry, 2012). Although research indicates curricular differences exist between higher education administration and educational leadership K-12 administration (EdD and PhD) programs, no survey or

historical research has been uncovered that details the growth of higher education administration-specific EdD/PhD programs in a comparable form. Nevertheless, some modern research indicates the growth of higher education administration PhD programs (Valerin, 2012), but currently there is no research that presents modern and/or historical growth patterns between higher education administration PhD/EdD programs.

Table 1

*A Chronology of the EdD (Perry, 2012)*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Results</b>
1893	Teachers College, J. Russell	First PhD in Education	To develop a professional degree
1920	Harvard Graduate School of Education, Henry Holmes	First EdD in Education	To establish independence from School of Arts and Sciences
1930	Monroe, W.	Survey of 6 institutions with EdD and PhD programs	Curriculum between the two very similar with small difference
1931	Freeman, F. N.	Extended Monroe study to 13 institutions	EdD served to “organize existing knowledge instead of discovering new truths” (p. 1)
1934	Teachers College, William Russell	Develops EdD	Attempts to establish independence and follow national trends
1930-1940	EdD proliferation at Stanford, Berkeley, Michigan, and others	All develop EdD	The EdD degree spread widely among schools of education but with little distinction of purpose either academically or institutionally.
1963	Eells, W. C.	Survey of characteristics of each degree—admissions, nature of exams and dissertation, classification of each degree	Determined the degrees are indistinguishable



Table 1 (continued)

1964	AACTE & Ludlow, H. G.	Survey of abilities, career motivation, and job satisfaction in graduates at 91 institutions	Ph.D. “intended to be an academic-research degree;” EdD “intended to be a practitioner professional degree” (p. 22). No difference in intelligence or ability
1966	AACTE & Brown, L. D.	Follow up to Ludlow study to determine similarities and difference of degree holders	Despite increase in degrees awarded, most graduates went back to prior job
1983	Anderson, D.G.	Study of his academic department at University of Washington to determine similarities and differences between degrees—program requirements and job aspirations	Strong similarity in admission preparation and graduation requirements; however, Ph.D. considered to be scholarly while EdD viewed as professional degree
1985	Dill & Morrison	Study of research requirements at 81 institutions	Found methods of inquiry Similar
1988	Clifford, G. J. & Guthrie, J. W.	Study examined EdD schools in the US	Call for elimination of PhD to fully professionalize education and make EdD degree of choice
1991	Brown, L. D.	Response to Clifford & Guthrie utilizing historical data on both degrees	Flux in both suggest each are valid degrees
1993	Osguthorpe & Wong	Study of trends in doctoral education	Found no trend in moving to offer one or the other, EdD more likely found at comprehensive institutions; called for national discussion to distinguish

Table 1 (continued)

1998	Deering, T. E.	Examined dissertations, research taught, and utilization of each degree at 50 institutions	Dissertation differences consistent with purpose of each degree—PhD creates knowledge, EdD investigates practical issues; both taught qualitative and quantitative methods
2006	Shulman, Golde, Bueschel & Garabedian	Response to work of CID; historical review of doctoral preparation	Called for reclaiming of the EdD as the professional practice degree in education
2005	Levine, A.	Response to Shulman et al.	Six disincentives that will keep schools of education from distinguishing
2007	Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate	Consortium to rethink the EdD	25 colleges and Schools of Education come together to redesign purpose and goals of EdD. Outcomes include definition of EdD, working principles for programs, and characteristics of graduates
2010	Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate	Consortium receives \$700,000 FIPSE Grant	To document change in EdD programs, Schools of Education and individual faculty and students

### Critiques of the PhD and EdD

While the number and type of doctoral degrees in education offered across the country continue to increase and become more diverse, traditional scholars continually express concern that programs offering professional or practitioner-based degrees, such as the EdD, are not held to the same level of rigorous standards for both student entry and completion when compared to the PhD (Archbald, 2011; Jackson & Kelley, 2002).

Despite the years of discouraging dialogue regarding the EdD, some instructors and administrators recognize the strong points of both EdD and PhD degree programs. One

such claim reports the EdD results in practitioners educated in quality scholarly work with a research component based on pertinent yet diverse issues identified by societal needs and demands, by faculty members who are able to connect theory with application, for a more robust educational experience (Klenowski, Ehrich, Kapitzke, & Trigger, 2011). Although the current reputation of all types of doctoral degrees, practitioner- and research-based, are under scrutiny by leaders in higher education, the literature notes the EdD consistently receives the most negative attention, specifically when compared to the PhD in education-related fields of study (Carlson & Mitchell, 2011; Shulman et al., 2006). While the PhD, as an academic research degree, is still touted as the most reputable doctoral degree, the similarities in degree requirements and curricula between the PhD and EdD have caused concern that the PhD is losing some of its reputation for rigor for which it was once known (Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Wergin, 2011). Some scholars suggest there is a correlation between the perceived weakness in the PhD in education and what some scholars refer to as the less well-regarded and less rigorous EdD (Redden, 2007). Aside from the remarks by Perry (2012) in the table above, there is little literature comparing a sample of actual EdD and PhD programs, when looking at program design and curricula, particularly in higher education administration. What literature that does exist focuses more on comparing the admission requirements and dissertation portion of the EdD and PhD programs; however, these studies are not limited only to the emphasis area of higher education administration (Martinez-Lebron, 2016; Valerin, 2011; West et al., 2011). These studies tend to focus more on the emphasis area of educational leadership (K-12) education (Wergin, 2011). While this information is marginally helpful, questions regarding similarities and

differences in the EdD and PhD curricula in higher education administration still exist, and remain unanswered.

#### Need for and Credibility of the EdD

Since the creation and implementation of the EdD, many scholars have questioned whether the associated need and demand truly warranted the addition of a doctoral degree other than the PhD. During the creation and implementation of the first EdD, Harvard University's president, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, believed there was little reason for two degrees (the EdD and PhD) within the same field of study, namely education. Therefore, PhD studies continued with field disciplines considered more traditional at the time, such as the arts and sciences, while education-related doctoral studies were divided from the PhD degree programs and designated as the EdD (West et al, 2011). It was Lowell's division of degree type for education-related fields of study that gave birth to the EdD. After 1920, the offering of the EdD became more common at colleges and universities across the country (Perry, 2012; Powell, 1980). At the time, the need for the education doctorate presented itself in several ways. As previously mentioned, the EdD was born as a way to differentiate doctorally-prepared scholars from practitioners. Besides differentiation in name only, schools and colleges of education began offering the EdD in an attempt to simultaneously separate the study and practice of education from that of the arts and sciences, and meet the demands of the profession (Baez, 2002; Perry, 2012; Townsend, 2002; Wergin, 2011). In 1934, William Fletcher Russell, Dean of Columbia University's Teacher's College, made distinctions between the PhD in education and the EdD by implementing coursework that was pertinent to real-world events in education (Cremin, 1978; Zambo, Zambo, Buss, Perry, & Williams, 2014).

During the 1950s, concerns and discussions surged amongst scholars regarding the true purpose, value, and credibility of the EdD when compared to the PhD (Nelson & Coorough, 1994). Over time, this concern has continued to grow, remaining an unsolved issue in American higher education (Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993). Although these concerns still exist, professionals in many specialty areas of education continue to work toward a conclusion that would satisfy both schools of thought, the PhD and the EdD.

However, linked to the ongoing discussion for the need of the EdD, there is further concern from scholars regarding the credibility of the EdD because it is often perceived as both academically less rigorous, easier, and takes less time to complete than a PhD; therefore, many students pursue the EdD for the sole purpose of improving their credentials, rather than actually learning with the intent to contribute to existing knowledge (Basu, 2012; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Perry, 2012; Redden, 2007; Townsend, 2002). Because of this, the academy has begun questioning the motives of students pursuing an EdD. While many scholars are skeptical of the EdD, citing its purpose and lack of curricular rigor as a major deficiency, there are those that argue the current requirements for acceptance into and successful completion of PhD programs are also lacking (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Wergin, 2011).

#### Theoretical Framework

This research study was conducted using Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations as a framework. Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations is often applied to change and development processes within public and private corporations and settings (Caldwell, 2011; Fillion, Koffi, & Ekionea, 2015; Visser & Van der Togt, 2015). However, in recent years, the Theory of Learning Organizations

(Senge, "Fifth Discipline," 2006) is becoming more widely used by administrators, educators, professionals, and researchers within fields of academic study such as business schools, healthcare education, nursing education, and library and information science (Al-Abri & Al-Hashmi, 2007; Alavi & McCormick, 2004; Giesecke & McNeil, 2004; Lawler & Sillitoe, 2013; Senge, "Fifth Discipline," 2006). Senge ("Leader's New Work," 2006) posits the need for true understanding of how organizations learn is great and continuously growing. Further, while humans are, by design, natural born learners, society often impedes this learning and the resulting development, as today's culture is one of control. Through this control, society rewards those whose production is motivated through preconceived notions of what is right or appropriate according to current trends and status quo, rather than what could be improved on through the process of learning. Gephart, Marsick, Van Buren, and Spiro (1996) explain that "becoming a learning organization implies a proactive shift letting events unfold toward putting in place a course of action to enhance systems-level learning" (p. 42). Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) systematic and innovative model for framing and incorporating change is both appropriate for and applicable to the field of higher education, as a learning organization with the potential to continuously improve and thrive by using history and current experiences to help form the future. The following provides detail regarding how the framework provided by Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations is applicable to the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate's (CPED) ongoing revitalization of the EdD, as well as serving as a framework for this qualitative study of EdD curricula.

Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations is based on the following five disciplines: 1. systems thinking, 2. personal mastery, 3. mental models, 4. building shared vision, and 5. team learning. In order to achieve the maximum benefit, these five disciplines must be applied in conjunction with one another, rather than individually.

The first discipline, systems thinking, requires one to envision the specific system as a whole, rather than as individual portions or pieces. It is only by viewing this system, or organization, as a single and solid institution that change can positively be affected. Because individuals are often inadvertently immersed in this system, it is difficult to separate or remove oneself from the experience to objectively and comprehensively observe the whole pattern of change. Like the work of the CPED, through systems thinking, learning organizations seldom differentiate between the roles of the leader and the teacher, as it is everyone's responsibility to serve as both teachers and learners (Kerfoot, 2005). As CPED-participating institutions began their self-reflection on both the history and current state of the EdD, their goal for improvement of the EdD curriculum was singular, to reinvent and improve the degree program altogether. Lawler and Sillitoe (2013) suggest "organisational learning is not seen as a one-off or isolated occurrence, but is a contributing element in an ongoing process of continual improvement and reflection" (p. 495). Alavi and McCormick (2004) argue that while more emphasis is placed on the cooperative learning of students, there is a greater need for collaborative and collective learning of faculty members and administrators, as this is an essential factor in learning organizations, particularly education. In this study, the researcher proposes that systems thinking among focus group participants will aid in further

discussion and analysis of the EdD in higher education administration curricula, before and after the work of the CPED, with the hopes of identifying successful and less successful structures and functions. This systems thinking approach to higher education, specifically curricula, is the catalyst to push higher education forward, adapting to necessary change, with the ability to efficiently identify and correct flaws (Alavi & McCormick, 2004; Kerfoot, 2005; Lawler & Sillitoe, 2013).

The second discipline, personal mastery, emphasizes the importance of the individuals that make up the learning organization. Senge ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) defines personal mastery as "the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively" (p. 7). Personal mastery begins when one person identifies what he or she considers to be important, or what truly matters in life. Personal mastery is achieved when a person dedicates his or her life to trying to achieve those things identified as meaning the most. Moreover, personal mastery encourages continuous learning and growth of the individual, which serves as a foundation of sorts for the individual, and in turn, for the learning organization as a whole. Alavi and McCormick (2004) posit that personal mastery is a vital element of educational learning organizations because it directly affects the perceived influence these educators have over student learners. Further, the overall strength and potential of a learning organization is determined by that of the individuals making up the institution. Therefore, without the aforementioned vision, focused energy, patience, and ability to objectively see reality that is the foundation of personal mastery, the potential of the learning organization will be stunted.



Mental models, the third of Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) five disciplines, are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). Mental models are often unrealized, resulting in thoughts, opinions, and decisions that are subconsciously influenced. Mental models have the ability to negatively influence one's behavior and thoughts which can guide decisions, with the possibility of having a significant impact on an institution. Therefore, individuals and organizations must work to identify those mental models with measures in place for ensuring that results are carefully scrutinized and free of any subconscious influences. Working in pairs or groups enhances the results of this process, as the scrutiny becomes more rigorous with additional observation and review. When considering mental models in terms of higher education, the potential effects could be tremendous. Alavi and McCormick (2004) note that incorrect mental models have the potential to hinder educational effectiveness. For instance, mental models may affect the leadership styles of administrators and faculty members, which in turn could influence both what and how the students are taught and consequently learn.

The fourth discipline, building shared vision, is a timeless concept used in nearly all types of institutions and organizations. Senge ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) defines the term by explaining "the practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared 'pictures of the future,' that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance" (p. 9). Although the concept is constructive and the potential benefit is both rewarding and valuable, there are challenges to consider when building a shared vision. In order to be effective, the vision must genuinely be shared. The concept, or concepts, must be agreed upon collectively by each member encompassing the group. Senge

(“Fifth Discipline,” 2006) explains, more often than not, the vision is not actually shared, but is the vision of a single leader rather than the group. However, if shared with and agreed upon by each member within the group, a concept envisioned by a single leader can be translated into a shared vision. Group members would determine the need for any alterations of the vision, and in doing so, the resulting guidelines or principles would reflect the feedback and involvement of each member. By working closely together, groups can overcome the challenges of working toward a shared vision, as clearly defining the shared vision is oftentimes more grueling than actually working toward the vision. While challenging to define, the potential positive impact of building a shared vision is great. When working toward a true shared vision, individuals usually participate enthusiastically, putting forth genuine effort. Moreover, individuals contributing toward a shared vision generally participate because they want to, rather than being forced to do so. The contribution of time, ideas, and opinions during the building process provide participants with a sense of pride and ownership. This sense of ownership, or buy-in of the project, coupled with the sense of pride, drives individuals’ efforts throughout future work, generally resulting in a more carefully constructed and overall more superior product.

Senge’s (“Fifth Discipline, 2006) fifth and final discipline is team learning. This concept is based on the idea that group learning is stronger and more productive than learning on an individual basis. However, while the group effort exceeds that of the individual, the individual is still growing at a quicker rate than if learning alone, just by being a part of the group. Al-Abri and Al-Hashmi (2007) believe when people are valued

and empowered, they will have the necessary confidence to demonstrate individual creativity, which is imperative in a learning organization.

As previously mentioned, Senge's learning organization model has been employed as a theoretical framework in other research. Giesecke and McNeil (2004) discuss their application of Senge's Theory of Learning Organizations to library systems. Their transition to a learning organization model was born out of necessity to ensure more flexibility during a time in which the ability to change could determine the success or failure of an organization. Much like higher education, libraries also provide a product. Whether a learner or consumer, the expectation is a quality product, regardless of the context.

Another example is Kerfoot's (2005) application of Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations as a framework in nursing, as well as nursing education. By applying this theory, Kerfoot (2005) was able to encourage learning within her organization, resulting in the cultivation of future leaders, much like the work of the CPED. By reinventing the EdD, future graduates have the opportunity to become better prepared for leadership opportunities within higher education.

By applying Senge's ("Fifth Discipline, 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations to higher education and the EdD research and curricular design work conducted by the CPED, the outcome could encourage a product put forth by objective leaders with a shared vision for improved learning opportunities. By purpose and design, institutions of higher education should be learning organizations. However, this is oftentimes not the case. Senge believes schools (at all levels) collectively need to do a better job of preparing our educators (O'Neil, 1995). By applying Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006)

Theory of Learning Organizations to the conceptual framework created by the CPED, the overall product will be improved because of the consensus, collective efforts, and investments of instructors with knowledge of and experience in the EdD in higher education administration.

#### Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED)

Part one of the CPED, originating with 25 representatives of institutions of higher education, was begun in 2007 with support from the Council of Academic Deans of Research and Education Institutions (CADREI), the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and meager funding, also from the Carnegie Foundation (CPED, 2016, “History of CPED,” para. 1; Perry, 2012). The original purpose of the CPED was to redesign and strengthen the EdD to better prepare and benefit practitioners, clinical faculty, school administrators, and staff working in educational institutions and organizations. The CPED, now a collaborative effort of more than 80 institutions of higher education that offer doctoral degrees in education, “...have committed resources to work together to undertake a critical examination and redesign of the education doctorate” to define, believe, and demonstrate that the EdD “is the professional doctorate in education,” that “prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation of new knowledge, and for the stewardship of the profession” (CPED, 2016, “About Us,” para. 6). The CPED’s EdD efforts are not limited to one level of education or area of specialty, but encompasses all levels, including higher education administration. Early on, the CPED defined both a mission and vision for their work to help others better understand these collaborative efforts. “The mission of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) is to strengthen, improve, support, and

promote the CPED framework through continued collaboration and investigation” (CPED, 2016, “About US,” para. 3). By becoming an institutional member of the CPED, educators are provided resources to guide the creation or redesign of EdD programs. The CPED vision statement further explains the efforts put forth by this education consortium. By expounding on the mission statement, the CPED’s vision provides a glimpse toward the future, as it explains the intentions of membership within this consortium.

It states:

The vision of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) is to inspire all schools of education to apply the CPED framework to the preparation of educational leaders to become well-equipped scholarly practitioners who provide stewardship of the profession and meet the educational challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (CPED, 2016, “About Us,” para. 2).

Still somewhat in its infancy by 2009, the CPED began working to identify principles that would aid institutions of higher education with EdD programs in all emphasis areas looking to re-envision and redesign their programs. The initial task of all CPED member institutions (25 at that time) was to submit three-to-seven statements representing the Principles for the Professional Doctorate in Education (PPDEs) that they would like to aid in the governance of EdD program(s) at their individual institutions (CPED, 2016, “Development of Working Principles”). At the 2009 Convening, these 35 suggestions submitted by participating CPED members were entered into “nomination.” Also at the two-and-a-half day Convening, participating members were divided into five groups and asked to reduce the original 35 suggestions by eliminating duplicate ideas and

combining predominant themes, resulting in 10 working principles (CPED, 2016, “Development of Working Principles”). Also at the Convening, but after the initial reduction of ideas, CPED members were asked to further narrow the remaining statements using specific criteria. These criteria explained “statements should: (1) cut across all areas of the program—from capstone to courses;” and “(2) clearly demonstrate why this program is an EdD and not a PhD” (CPED, 2016, “Development of Working Principles,” para. 9). From this point, the five groups were asked to identify overarching themes that were evident in each of the remaining statements, and these statements resulted in the following five themes: “(1) social justice, equity; (2) inquiry related to problems of practice; (3) collaboration; (4) multidisciplinary; and (5) stewardship” (CPED, 2016, “Development of Working Principles,” para. 10). These working principles remain today as the guide for program design for the EdD. The following are the six principles identified by the CPED for the EdD in multiple emphasis areas of education.

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

theory with systemic and systematic inquiry. (6) Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice. (CPED, 2016, “Development of Working Principles,” para. 16).

It is these recommendations, or guiding principles, that the CPED refers to as part of the framework for re-envisioning the EdD. In order to reduce any possible confusion, the CPED worked to carefully select and clearly redefine the following terms for its own purposes. These terms, although often used in education settings, are specifically meaningful when used in any context including the CPED and the EdD: scholarly practitioner, signature pedagogy, inquiry as practice, laboratories of practice, dissertation in practice, and problem of practice (all of which are previously defined in chapter one).

After part one was complete, the CPED began part two of this comprehensive collaborative effort to reinvent and redesign the EdD with funding from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). From 2010-2013, the original 21 CPED member institutions embarked on a study of the EdD. As people learned of this initiative and its mission, the CPED grew, as 27 new universities and colleges with EdD degree programs joined the group, increasing the membership to 48 institutions. It was during this time that Dr. Jill A. Perry, CPED Executive Director, received a research faculty position at Duquesne University, which committed continued support to the CPED and where the CPED was ultimately moved (2016, “History of CPED,” para. 2).

Many important things took place during part three of the CPED, which occurred during 2014. The CPED again experienced an increase in institutions when it opened its membership to applicant colleges and universities. Other instances noted during this time included: membership support of the effort to change their tax status to become a non-

profit organization, categorized as a 501(c)3; the collection and analysis of FIPSE information, as well as data used in EdD program preparation; all of which when combined, resulted in the publication of reports and manuscripts (CPED, 2016, “History of the CPED,” para. 3). Still in part three, the CPED experienced more changes as its headquarters once again relocated, this time to the University of Pittsburgh, when Perry, CPED Executive Director, accepted a non-tenure track position in the School of Education as an associate professor (CPED, 2016, “History of the CPED,” para. 4).

This consortium began with the goal of redesigning and strengthening the EdD to better prepare and benefit practitioners, clinical faculty, school administrators, and staff working in educational institutions and organizations. At the same time, members focused on better meeting the administrative needs of today’s higher education system with qualified and appropriately educated practitioners with doctoral degrees (CPED, 2016; Zambo et al., 2014). Although never mentioned as their intent, CPED participants employed several of the principles included in Senge’s (“Fifth Discipline,” 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations. From the crafting of mission and vision statements to the restructuring of the curricular framework, these theoretical facets served to strengthen these efforts through a systematic team approach. Although the CPED’s work is ongoing, preliminary results indicate collaborating institutions are successfully working toward comprehensively improving the EdD by the implementation of practices and strategies identified in the CPED framework for EdD redesign (CPED, 2016, “About Us”). This success is illustrated by the number of institutions participating in the CPED, the result of publications from institutions participating in the CPED, and testimonies of



graduates from programs participating in the CPED (CPED, “History of the CPED,” 2016).

### Current Status of the EdD

Two of the many things that occurred since the first EdD program was created were Harvard University’s recent elimination of the EdD and the formation and subsequent work of the CPED, both of which have impacted and guided discussions and developments pertaining to the EdD degree. In 2012, Harvard University, the first American university to award the EdD, announced the elimination of this degree program (Basu, 2012). Differing from many truly practitioner-based EdD programs, Harvard representatives indicated their EdD always required original research during the dissertation process; however, replacing the EdD with the PhD was intended to further strengthen their School of Education and the university as a whole by linking “the intellectual resources in the university to produce leaders in the field of education” (Basu, 2012, para. 4).

### Summary

Since its inception and implementation, the EdD has long been thought of disparagingly by many scholars. The current state of America’s complex higher education system is far from perfect. There is a need for a system that functions more effectively and efficiently. This could be addressed by improving the academic and professional preparation of administrators (Zambo et al., 2014; Nelson & Coorough, 1994). Might the EdD be the vehicle to bring about these improvements? The true purpose of the PhD in education, with its emphasis in conducting original research, does not always sufficiently prepare practitioners with the necessary leadership skills for

administrative roles (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Redden, 2007). By carefully studying the purpose of the PhD and EdD, through efforts such as those of the CPED and additional individual studies, deficiencies and solutions will continue to be identified. Continuous evaluation and improvement in the signature pedagogy and curriculum of the EdD will ensure the degree program is relevant to current educational needs and market demand, further ensuring those practitioners in the field of education are well-equipped to successfully manage the work that is expected of them. This continuous cycle can lead to further discussions, recommendations, and improvements with better discernment between the degrees, finally creating change in the decades-old argument regarding the EdD versus the PhD. Moreover, an improved EdD focused on practical and current issues, using applied research relating directly to today's educational needs could more appropriately prepare graduates who will ultimately improve America's educational system.

## CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

### Overview

The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast higher education administration EdD curricula across the country, for select institutions not participating in the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), or using the CPED curricular framework. The following research questions guided this study:

1. According to participants whose programs are not participating in the CPED, what are the necessary structures and functions of well-run and respected CPED model EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?
2. How does a sample of existing EdD program curricula in higher education administration, not participating in the CPED, compare to the CPED curricular framework, including the identification of overlapping materials?
3. As compared to the CPED curricular framework, what are the recurring areas needing improvement, based on a sample of existing non-CPED participating EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?

This chapter provides detail regarding the purpose of the study, study participants, data collection process, data collection instruments, and data analysis.

### Procedures

Focus groups, a qualitative methods design borrowing elements from the Delphi technique, were employed to gather data from doctorally-prepared instructors teaching in EdD higher education administration programs in four-year public and private institutions of higher education in the United States, whose institutions were not participating members in the CPED. There are various methods for employing a qualitative study,

including but not limited to, focus groups, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, questionnaires via email correspondence, and electronically administered questionnaires.

Merriam (2009) explains there is no set number of participants required per focus group (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Although not very specific, Boudah (2011) further notes that “in most cases, there are fewer participants in qualitative studies than there are in experimental studies...” (p. 127).

This study included data from two sets of three focus groups each. Each focus group in this study began with three participant members; however, one group in the second iteration of focus group discussions only had two participants, as the third participant was unexpectedly unavailable. This number of participants allowed for an in-depth dialogue, while keeping the discussion manageable.

The number of focus groups in the study was limited by the study’s selection criteria and potential participants’ availability. For this qualitative research study, criterion sampling was used. Criterion sampling works well with this qualitative method, as it allows for identification of doctorally-prepared (EdD and PhD) instructors teaching in EdD higher education administration programs, whose institutions are not participating members in the CPED. The sample population was determined by selection of those participants that met these specific criteria (Patton, 2002).

As previously mentioned, the literature provided vague recommendations regarding the number of participants acceptable per focus group; however, there was little to no information on how many focus groups to conduct when employing a qualitative study that specifically includes elements borrowed from the Delphi technique.

### *Participant Recruitment*

Doctorally-prepared instructors in higher education administration EdD programs, representing institutions not currently participating in the CPED project, were identified and contacted to request their participation in this research study. The researcher contacted the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) to obtain a list of colleges and universities with EdD and PhD programs in higher education administration. The source used was the ASHE Higher Education Directory. The information included in this directory is self-reported, but compiled and disseminated by ASHE. Per the ASHE Directory, at the time of this study, there were 229 colleges and universities with higher education programs. One hundred fifty-one of these colleges and universities did not have programs with higher education administration degrees. These institutions were eliminated from the potential pool of participants. The remaining list of institutions was compared to the CPED's higher education member institutions. Forty-five institutions were found to be CPED member institutions. Those institutions identified as members of the CPED consortium were also eliminated as a pool of potential participants. A list of 31 institutions remained. The researcher verified that each of these 31 remaining institutions met the following criteria: 1. was not a member of the CPED consortium; 2. offered an EdD program of study; and 3. offered an emphasis area of higher education administration within its EdD program.

The researcher was unable to confirm the degree type and emphasis area for three of the 31 programs. For these three programs, one did not respond when contacted, another required a survey be completed in order to gain any information regarding the

program, including appropriate faculty contacts, and the third required an application be completed before a program representative would reply to an inquiry.

Once the researcher had a verified list of 29 institutions meeting all selection criteria, the researcher identified each of the institution's EdD in higher education administration program director. These program directors were identified through ASHE listings or institutional websites. The program directors were initially contacted by the researcher via email. In the initial email, the researcher requested that those interested in learning more about the study reply by email, indicating their willingness and availability to talk further via telephone about participation in the study. Twenty-nine program directors were contacted. Of those contacted, 13 replied with interest, with nine of those actually participating in the study. Of these nine participants, four held EdD degrees and five held PhD degrees, while one of these nine holds both PhD and JD degrees. Six were female and three male. The participants' years of teaching experience ranged from three to 22. Of the nine colleges and universities whose EdD program directors were included in the study, six are public universities, while three are private universities, two of which are faith-based. Table 2 provides specific demographics for each participant.

Table 2

*Demographic Descriptors of the Participants*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Title/Institutional Role</b>	<b>Degree(s)</b>	<b>Years Teaching</b>	<b>Institution Type</b>
1	Female	Associate professor and coordinator of higher education programs	PhD	12	Public
2	Female	Clinical assistant professor and assistant coordinator for the higher education program	PhD	5	Public
3	Male	Clinical associate professor and director of the doctoral program in higher education	EdD	3	Private Faith-based

Table 2 (continued)

4	Female	Chair of the division of educational leadership, in which lies the higher education program	PhD	22	Public
5	Female	Associate professor, graduate program director for the department of educational leadership, and program coordinator for masters and doctoral programs	PhD	9	Public
6	Female	Tenured associate professor, program director for the doctoral program in higher education leadership	EdD	6	Private
7	Female	Clinical assistant professor, oversees master's degree assistantships and the EdD program	EdD	6	Public
8	Male	Program director for the EdD program and assistant to the university President	EdD	4	Private Faith-based
9	Male	Associate professor and program coordinator for Adult and Higher Education programs	JD/PhD	10	Public

Verbal consent was obtained by the nine participants during a telephone conversation with the researcher. The researcher grouped the participants into three focus groups of three participants each. Once verbal agreement was obtained, participants were emailed an invitation for participation form (Appendix B) that provided an explanation of the purpose of the study, as well as a participation consent form that clearly explained their role as a participant in the study.

#### *Introduction of Discussion Topic*

Prior to the focus group session, the researcher emailed participants a brief two-page report-style document detailing CPED efforts, including the culminating curriculum framework (Appendix C). Participants were asked to review this report prior to their first

scheduled focus group session, as it was the basis of the first iteration of group discussions.

#### *Online Data Collection Methods*

The focus groups in this study were conducted and recorded electronically via Zoom. Because participants were located across the country, each person was asked individually before initiation of the focus groups for their consent to have audio and visual recordings made of the focus groups to accurately capture each session's discussion. Zoom is a software program that allows communication in multiple formats, including texting, calling telephones from a computer, instant messaging, and video chatting (with individuals and/or groups). The visual recording aspect of Zoom picked up on physical gestures, which are also methods of communication that would not otherwise be captured by audio recording alone, strengthening the accuracy of the information collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Zoom provides a cost-effective, convenient, and efficient way to record research sessions such as focus groups, with multiple iterations of data collection (Janghorban et al., 2014; Sullivan, 2012).

#### *Focus Group Facilitation*

In an attempt to eliminate bias or untrustworthiness, the researcher served as the only facilitator to oversee each focus group session. Additionally, a technology specialist assisted in the facilitation of the technical aspects of each focus group session. Serving as the primary facilitator, the researcher controlled the conversation by making sure all participants were heard; ensured the productive flow of the conversation; and transitioned the discussions into new topics (Queeney, 1995).



### *Participant Anonymity*

Research studies oftentimes ensure participants either complete anonymity, or quasi-anonymity (De Villiers et al., 2005; Kenney et al., 2011; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). At minimum, quasi-anonymity is important, as the literature explains that it is believed that this safeguard, or security, provides participants the opportunity to respond more truthfully. Quasi-anonymity works well in eliminating insecurities that might surface when one or more participants may easily persuade other participants to answer in a different way by having a more dominant personality (De Villiers et al., 2005; Green, 2014; Keeney et al., 2011). Therefore, participants were introduced to one another by first name only, omitting last names as well as institution names.

### *Delphi Technique*

The sole use of a qualitative research approach, rather than quantitative or mixed methods designs, provided an appropriately-detailed understanding of participants' beliefs, knowledge, experience, understanding, and ultimately, responses that were more comprehensive and descriptive in nature (Boudah, 2001; Creswell, 2009). By eliciting information from a group of instructors in higher education administration programs, their answers, based on a culmination of many years of knowledge and experiences, led to detailed and lengthy responses, all of which were paramount to this study (Boudah, 2001; Green, 2014).

Many qualitative methods, including but not limited to, the Delphi technique, are often considered cumbersome, tedious, and time consuming, yet rigorous research tools. This study required a second round of question development and focus groups to obtain responses with the appropriate level of understanding and detail (Green, 2014; Keeney et

al., 2011). The first iteration of the study instrument used to guide the focus group discussions consisted of nine open-ended questions (Appendix D). The literature explains that when the first round of data collection is qualitative, it is important to have no fewer than five priority questions, but no more than 10 (Keeney et al., 2011). It is believed that by crafting an appropriate number of questions for the first round of data collection, participant attrition will be less likely, the data collected will be more meaningful, and the second iteration of questions will be more manageable (Keeney et al., 2011).

After the first iteration of focus group discussions was held, the audio portion of the Zoom recordings was transcribed and notations made in the transcript of any visual cues that further informed the meaning of the spoken words. The transcriptions were disseminated to the focus group participants for individual review of accuracy. Any instances of potential bias were identified by having participants and the researcher review each focus group transcript (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012). This use of triangulation is a strength of the employed qualitative research method (Keeney et al., 2011), as it allowed the researcher to ensure the processes of obtaining, transcribing, verifying, and analyzing the data was accurate (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). After the transcript was approved by the researcher and focus group participants, the researcher analyzed the data according to the methods described in the following section.

While this qualitative study borrows elements from the Delphi technique, it differs from original, or classical versions, which use four iterations of the study instrument; however, more recently, this process has been altered to employ sometimes three or even two iterations (Keeney et al., 2011). Information collected during the first

iteration of focus groups informed this research, aiding in determining the changes and additional questions to be crafted for the second iteration of questions for the focus groups. After data analysis, a new, revised set of priority questions was crafted by the researcher, and employed during the second iteration of focus group sessions. Data collection and analysis occurred for two iterations of priority questions. As there were concerns about attrition rates from focus group iteration one to focus group iteration two, the researcher was pleased when the necessary information was collected through only two iterations (Keeney et al., 2011). A third iteration of focus groups was not conducted since discussions from the first two iterations of focus groups produced rich data with recurring themes.

The researcher's assertion was that with manageable group sizes and number of sessions, the likelihood of participant attrition in the study would be reduced (Keeney et al., 2011). Attrition indeed was low, as only one of nine participants was unable to participate in the second iteration of focus group sessions. This participant's absence, during the second iteration of focus groups, was specifically due to unforeseen circumstances.

The researcher attributed the low attrition rate between focus group iterations to the fact that participants came to the study with specialized knowledge of the study subject. It was believed the participants' investment in the issue reduced attrition rates. Also, the researcher provided a quick turnaround for review and feedback of the focus group transcripts. This likely added to the minimal attrition between focus group iterations (Keeney et al., 2011).

The responses and results gathered during this qualitative study did not provide any guaranteed right or wrong answer (Green, 2014; Keeney et al., 2011). It was the participants' responses that guided the researcher in making conclusions by gathering the answers and organizing them according to themes and sub-themes (De Villiers et al., 2005).

#### Collection and Analysis of Data

The electronic, or video-based, function of Zoom ensured that focus group participants' responses were automatically saved and stored, making retrieval, transcription, organization, and analysis of this information more practical and efficient (Brüggen & Willems, 2009; Janghorban et al., 2014). Data were initially categorized, or coded, by focus group question. After reviewing answers to each focus group question, the researcher identified the following categories: "(1) the main concern or concerns of the participants—that is, what they were focused on or viewed as problematic; (2) the tacit assumptions of the participants; (3) explicit processes and actions; and (4) latent processes and patterns" (Lapan et al., 2012). Specific words, or codes, were created to aid in the simplification of organizing these categories. As themes began to emerge from the four categories mentioned above, data were coded and grouped accordingly. During the review of data, it was necessary to modify these codes to improve their fit with the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Lapan et al., 2012). As themes were grouped and coded, it also became necessary to create and define subcodes. Participants' responses were further studied to determine the relatability to the principles of Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Once all information was appropriately coded, it was grouped again according to similarities and differences in participants' responses. Both similarities and differences were noted, and the information was further analyzed to determine possible implications of the findings. This process was repeated for each set of focus group transcripts.

The researcher oversaw all aspects of data collection, analysis, and dissemination of the findings to participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2002). After each focus group, the researcher emailed the transcripts to participants for individual review. Once participants reviewed the transcripts, they emailed the researcher their edits and/or approval. Any instances of potential bias were identified, as participants and the researcher reviewed each focus group transcript (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012). Again, this use of triangulation is a strength of the qualitative research method used in this study (Keeney et al., 2011), as it allowed the researcher to ensure the processes of obtaining, transcribing, verifying, and analyzing the data were accurate (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

#### Iterations of the Qualitative Instrument

The researcher developed both iterations of the qualitative instrument. The necessary amount of detail for identifying perceived similarities and differences among EdD curricula with an emphasis in higher education administration was obtained by conducting two iterations of a set of three focus group sessions.

##### *Phase I—Iteration I*

Upon reading the brief report of CPED efforts, focus group participants consenting to participate in this study took part in two iterations of focus groups to answer questions pertaining to the information provided in this assigned reading, and

how that information related to their experiences in higher education administration with their institution's EdD program. Each round of focus groups took 45 minutes or less to conduct.

In the first iteration of the qualitative instrument, participants answered questions that focused on the summary-style report regarding the CPED that they had been asked to read. These questions included, but were not limited to, information regarding the purpose of the CPED, history and current status of the initiative, and similarities and differences in EdD curricula with an emphasis in higher education administration for non-CPED participating institutions (Appendix D).

Responses from the first iteration of focus groups were collected, transcribed, and stored on the researcher's computer and a backup copy of the transcripts were stored on a USB drive and placed in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. In addition to the electronic backup copy, a hard copy of all focus group transcripts was also printed, organized in labeled folders by date, and locked in the researcher's office file cabinet. Transcripts were organized by a heading that contained the date the session was conducted. Similar responses were grouped together to determine common themes and used to form the questions for the second iteration of focus groups.

#### *Phase I—Iteration II*

Focus groups using the second iteration of the research instrument served as a follow-up to discussion of the first iteration of priority questions. The depth of these questions was based on the level of detail provided during the first iteration of focus groups. The second iteration of focus group discussions was facilitated by the researcher asking 15 open-ended questions. Questions for the second iteration of focus groups were

prepared to focus more on the reasons each institution chose not to participate in the CPED, to identify best practices, as well as methods recognized as being ineffective. Moreover, the questions for this iteration also focused on if and how the colleges and universities of focus group participants have worked to recently update or revise their EdD curricula in higher education administration. The recording, transcribing, analysis, and storage of data for iteration two was conducted in the same manner as previously described for iteration one. The researcher determined at this time that the appropriate amount and level of information was collected in the first and second iterations and a third was not necessary.

#### Phase II—Comparison of Curricula to the CPED Framework

Upon completion of data collection and analysis, the researcher compared the CPED model curricular framework with the curricula from participants' institutions. Both the focus groups' results and participants' curricula were compared against the CPED framework to further identify strengths and weaknesses in curricula for EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration. Study results aided the researcher in forming further recommendations for revising and improving this curricular framework, while also identifying additional gaps in the literature for future research studies.

The coding method described above was also applied in phase two. Themes emerged during the coding process and similar themes were grouped together. The researcher then compared the model developed through interpretation and analysis of data results to the CPED model curriculum framework. Results were recorded and written in narrative form. The results revealed both similarities and differences in the

curriculum framework as recommended by the research and the CPED model framework. Additionally, implications for change, as well as additional studies were noted.

#### Ethical Considerations and Research Permission

Prior to the commencement of this study, permission to conduct this research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM). In compliance with the regulations of the IRB at USM, an application was completed, submitted for review, and approved on January 5, 2017 (Appendix A).

Consent forms explained participants' rights, the associated risks with participation, and the expectation of confidentiality. The researcher distributed all consent forms to participants via email. Participants were asked to sign and return the consent form via email indicating their voluntary agreement to participate in the study. To further ensure participants were not ethically compromised, all participants were treated with respect; the researcher worked to gain the trust of participants; and cultural norms were identified or recognized within the higher education academic setting and adhered to throughout the course of the research study (Lapan et al., 2012).

As discussed previously, confidentiality of the focus group participants was ensured, as participants became known to one another by first name only, omitting last names and institution names during the actual focus groups. All focus group materials, including Zoom and audio recordings of the sessions and transcripts, were available to the focus group participants, the researcher, and the researcher's dissertation committee members only. The only identifying information in the transcripts of these focus groups was the first name of each participant; their respective academic institutions of higher



education were not named in the focus group sessions or transcripts. Further, participants were informed that only group information, with no personal information, would be presented in the dissertation and any resulting reports or publications. Upon completion of data analysis and the reporting of study results, all recordings of focus groups and transcripts were destroyed.

### Summary

This study was conducted using a qualitative research method that included a series of focus groups, framed around Senge's ("Fifth Discipline," 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations. The results of this study revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the structures and functions of the current EdD curriculum. Additional findings included participants' ideas and suggestions for improvements of the EdD curriculum, which included work already conducted by the CPED. Implications for future research regarding the EdD, specifically focusing on higher education administration, were also recognized and discussed in detail.

## CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

### Overview

Through the use of a qualitative research methods design, using Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations as a framework, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. According to participants whose programs are not participating in the CPED, what are the necessary structures and functions of well-run and respected CPED model EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?
2. How does a sample of existing EdD program curricula in higher education administration, not participating in the CPED, compare to the CPED curricular framework, including the identification of overlapping materials?
3. As compared to the CPED curricular framework, what are the recurring areas needing improvement, based on a sample of existing non-CPED participating EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?

Organized into two sections, this chapter presents the findings of this study. The following is a detailed discussion regarding the collected data, which was gathered and analyzed using a qualitative methods approach discussed in previous chapters. Section one explains the similarities and differences in opinion and experiences among participants throughout the three focus groups sessions conducted using both the first and second iterations of questions. Similarities were identified in accordance with Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, where he explained that adhering to the five principles of the theory should result in a consensus among participants. However, while participants' discussions of some questions resulted in a consensus, other discussions did

not, as some participants' answers showed a clear difference in opinions and experiences. In addition to the discussion of similarities and differences of opinion and experiences amongst participants, section one also includes direct quotations from participants that provide a detailed and richer understanding of these opinions and their meanings. Section two provides a comparison of the participants' institutions' curricular framework for their EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration when compared to the broad guidelines set forth through the model curricular framework provided by the CPED.

### Participation

Those participants who expressed their willingness and commitment to participate in this study did so for numerous reasons. Several participants were in the process of reviewing and evaluating their curricula and hoped by participating in this study, they would be able to offer more information and insight to their institution and department throughout their review processes.

One participant who took part in the study is a faculty member for a new degree program, with the first cohort enrolling for the fall 2016 term. She used her participation as an opportunity to learn as much as possible through other participants with vast experience in teaching, curriculum development, and program coordination. This participant wanted to take what she learned back to her own program in hopes of evaluating and improving any portion of her institution's new curriculum that is developed, but has not yet been put into practice.

Another participant agreed to participate because her institution had just gone through a very extensive and time consuming overhaul of their EdD in higher education

administration curriculum. Her institution decided not to participate in the CPED as a member institution because the requirements included the commitment of vast curricular revisions, which her institution had just completed. Because her institution did consider and use the CPED curricular framework as one of many models during these curricular revisions, her institution decided that participating as a CPED member institution was no longer in the best interest of her program or institution, as additional curricular revisions would have been required for membership.

Several participants chose to participate in the study because they had little to no knowledge of the CPED and its members' extensive work in revitalizing the EdD through curricular revisions. These participants wanted to learn more about the CPED and its members' work, trends in EdD programs in higher education administration across the country, and the opinions and experiences of their colleagues (other participants) regarding curricular strengths and weaknesses, as well as implications for change, at these other institutions.

Although not planned, or required for eligibility to participate, each participant held some type of administrative role within their institutions' higher education administration EdD program. The administrative capacities in which these participants serve, as well as their teaching experience in such programs, enhanced the information they provided during the focus group sessions, which is illustrated below in the Phase 1—Iterations I and II sections.

#### Phase I—Iteration I

In talking with focus group participants regarding structures and functions of well-run and respected CPED model EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education

administration, numerous themes began to emerge. These themes include: 1. curricular distinctions between the EdD and PhD in higher education administration programs, including required courses versus elective courses; 2. research methods and the research product in higher education administration EdD programs; 3. the CPED's influence regarding participants' higher education administration EdD program curricula; and 4. improving the EdD reputation (for the purposes of this study, specifically on programs with an emphasis in higher education administration).

### *Curricular Distinctions*

Participants mostly expressed a need for more significant curricular distinctions between the EdD and PhD in higher education administration programs, which included the identification of required courses versus elective courses. As described by the participants, the first step in identifying curricular distinctions between the EdD and PhD in higher education administration programs is to define or determine the purpose of these two degrees. Participants agreed that the purpose of the EdD (in higher education administration) is to prepare practitioners to use research with the knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively translate this research into practice. Further, they also agreed that the purpose of the PhD (in higher education administration) is to primarily prepare researchers, or scholars, who work to generate new knowledge, but also understand the translation of this research into practice.

Participants further agreed the lack of distinction in courses offered, the methods for how these courses are delivered, and the purpose and product of assignments for these courses often lead to EdD and PhD programs that are closely aligned, rather than distinctive. Participants offered both their points-of-view and suggestions for improving

curricular distinctions for EdD and PhD programs in higher education administration. Four participants recommended reducing the number of research methods courses and increasing the number of foundations courses for EdD programs, while reducing the number of foundations courses and increasing the number of research methods courses for PhD programs. Another participant suggested having only one program, either EdD or PhD, which would eliminate the potential for similarities in the two programs and their curricula. While discussing content delivery, and how that should be different based on whether the instruction is for EdD or PhD students, one participant explained:

I think that in an EdD we need to make sure that there are enough strategic courses. We're pretty careful in our curriculum that we're not teaching specific skills that will become outdated, but rather teach a student how to think like a leader, how to plan, how to assess situations and problems, because we don't know what the issues are going to be in five, 10, or 20 years! So, while I think that's important for PhD students, I don't think that's the focus, and we're trying to create students who can fit the leadership vacuum that's going to be occurring. We want to make sure they are armed with those kinds of skills.

When further discussing distinguishing EdD and PhD curricula in higher education administration programs, another participant weighed both the pros and cons. She explained that, "in some ways I think differentiation is really good and in some ways it creates more silos in the way that we think about practice and in the way we think of making our educational institution better."

As the dialogue progressed, another instructor participant explained her thoughts on distinguishing one degree from the other, and the many variables involved in such a process, with which several other participants agreed. She said:

I think the question presumes that it's possible to make curricular distinctions between the two degrees, which some days, I don't know how feasible it is. I also think we've been treading along a very well-worn road for decades. So it's not like this isn't a discussion that our people have come before and after are going to have as well. I think one big distinction is the focus on practice-based courses, but even then, not all EdD students are looking for, or need the same practice-based courses. So it's almost a continuing kind of circle of what resources do we have available to differentiate in the curriculum, what faculty do we have available to teach these different courses, who are our students, and what do they need?

When discussing required courses versus elective courses in higher education administration EdD programs, responses varied. However, most participants were quick to explain what they are familiar with, or know, is not necessarily what they believe is the best possible scenario in terms of required versus elective courses. Additionally, all participants agreed that the limited number of total program hours plays a direct role in the courses they must require versus those that are offered as electives. Participants listed the following type courses as those that should be required: professional seminar, history of higher education, program evaluation, administration, finance, law and ethics, social-cultural (focusing on understanding systems of equity), and research methods (introductory, qualitative, and quantitative courses). One participant expressed his belief

that it is incredibly important that both law and ethics courses be required (independently), as he says there is more than enough information to be covered in two classes separately. He further explained these courses are oftentimes watered down so that the content can be combined and taught in a single course, which tends to be ineffective and a disservice to the students and the field. This same participant also indicated he believes it is important to include and require both history and philosophy courses, as he explained, “you don’t know where you’re going if you don’t know where you’ve come from. And, you can’t effectively function in your position unless you know where you are philosophically in the field.” The other two participants in this focus group session shared this sentiment.

Answers regarding courses that should be offered as electives varied. Those programs that allow for electives are generally courses that are available to students outside of the higher education administration program. However, three out of nine participants indicated their programs does not offer electives, as the cohort nature of their programs do not allow for additional courses outside of the prescribed format of the curriculum.

#### *Research Methods and Research Product*

Numerous sub-themes emerged during each focus group session discussion regarding research methods and the final research product for the EdD in higher education administration. Some of these sub-themes include, but are not limited to, the number of research methods courses offered and/or required, who teaches these research methods courses, and equal attention given to both qualitative and quantitative research methods.



While participants did not provide an exact number of research courses that should be required, they did offer suggestions as to what courses would be most beneficial and valuable to their programs. Some of the identified research courses discussed included introduction to statistical research, advanced statistical research, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, and mixed methods research. However, one participant explained she has little experience with what is and is not needed in terms of research methods courses for an EdD program in higher education administration, as her program will officially begin with its first cohort in the fall of 2017.

In addition to the discussion of what research methods courses are believed to be most valuable, participants also focused a great deal on how these research methods courses are delivered to their students. More specifically, participants expressed concern and frustration regarding the delivery of these research methods classes, as they indicated the actual instruction oftentimes come from outside their department (and sometimes outside of their college). Courses taught by faculty members from different departments and colleges tend to be problematic, as the course design and delivery is oftentimes from a different perspective or context, and not the most appropriate for higher education administration EdD students who need instruction using applied research approaches. The participants expressed that when this occurs and students are not provided with the fundamental and foundational statistical background needed throughout their program, the implications can be far-reaching, ultimately affecting the final research product required by the degree program.

In addition to appropriate design and delivery of research methods courses, participants expressed concern regarding equal or no exposure to both qualitative and quantitative statistical methods. More than one participant recounted experiences in which an instructor preferred one statistical research method or application over another, and because of that preference, students were not provided equal exposure to both methods. Participants stated their belief that it is a disservice to students when they do not have an equal understanding of and experience using qualitative and quantitative research methods, for both their final program research project, as well as their future experiences in which they will be conducting research.

In addition to the dialogue regarding research methods, participants also discussed the final research project required for their higher education administration EdD programs, often referred to as a dissertation, or capstone. Although all nine participants' programs require a research project, the requirements and end product vary among programs and institutions. Participants shared several different views regarding this final project, the purpose of the project, and an appropriate term for this project. One participant believes there should not be the limitation of the requirements dictated by the use of a traditional dissertation, as this type of research is not always practical or most appropriate for the actual study to be conducted or the type of research the student will conduct upon program completion. Although several of the participants' programs require the traditional five-chapter dissertation, regardless of what it is referred to, they noted that the learning process and product are oftentimes less useful for students than other practices would be. Therefore, several participants stated their interest in other

forms or methods for having students end their degree program with a different, yet rigorously and professionally appropriate, research project.

Three participants stated their concern that changing the dissertation process has the potential to do more harm than good, with the possibility of negatively affecting the reputation and rigor associated with well-run and respected EdD programs. One of these participants explained her viewpoint more clearly when she said:

I feel like we struggle enough with the EdD in terms of credibility – wrongly in most cases! So I think about whether we are doing ourselves a disservice with how we're changing the dissertation process for EdD students, and I don't have an easy answer for it. My expectation for someone who holds either an EdD or PhD is that they're capable of developing a research study and seeing it through to the end, which is what I feel like the curriculum should train them to be able to do.

Within this same focus group session, another participant expanded on her colleague's remarks from a sustainability perspective when she noted:

Just to add, when I think about the experimentation with EdD programs and different forms and different models, which we're seeing a lot more than in PhD programs for a host of reasons, it comes to the very practical question of what is sustainable for the faculty who are delivering the program, and it may not be the one-on-one traditional dissertation approach. There's just not enough people at the table to make it happen. The question of what's the best for the degree has to be considered within what's physically possible by the faculty in the program.

Another participant explained her viewpoint regarding the expectations of the dissertation, or research project, for both the EdD and PhD in higher education administration, when she stated:

But I think in general, I don't know that we have done a good job for either PhDs or EdDs, quite frankly, of speaking articulately about what it is that we want our graduates to be able to do when they finish and how is that final product really helping them get there.

The two aforementioned participants also shared their reservations regarding the use of group model projects taking the place of the more traditional five-chapter dissertation. On the other hand, the participants noted that real-world experiences require group work; however, there is also the potential that a group model dissertation-type project will not be fair to all group members, as the work is seldom evenly distributed in these type projects.

Six of the nine participants noted their programs are moving toward the manuscript model, rather than the traditional five-chapter dissertation. It was explained that the influence here comes from administration within their programs, colleges, and universities as a whole. The premise for the manuscript method as the final research project is that the students are able to break into the role of publishing and dissemination of knowledge while still having academic support from faculty members and mentors. Moreover, it is also believed that if students are experienced in and accustomed to conducting research with the intent of publishing, that the research and publication processes will continue after graduation, positively impacting the professional reputation

of the graduate, as well as that of the academic institution, and specifically the EdD program from which they graduated.

One participant expanded on the external and political influence and implications regarding EdD programs as a whole, but particularly the final research project required for completion of the EdD in higher education administration. He explains that,

...we're treating this as more of a philosophical question, but it becomes a political question. It's not like we as faculty are making these decisions without influence from the outside—the government coming down from administration setting certain parameters that affect the way that we set up our programs.

*CPED Influence on Participants' Curricula*

Participants were asked about the influence the CPED's work has had on their program's higher education administration EdD curricula. Of the nine participants, five indicated that the CPED's work had little-to-no influence on their programs' higher education administration EdD curricula.

One participant explained that his program's use of CPED terminology has been helpful in creating a more understandable distinction between EdD and PhD programs in higher education administration, particularly in terms of the research aspect of the degree. He stated:

So for us, it's really how to have a broader, more accepted language around what it is we call research. I think that's been helpful for us in our model, to distinguish between the PhD and EdD, where there are more research courses in the PhD, but also the terminology is more research-focused. So that's been one of the big influences for us, is the language that we've adopted that we've been able

to take from that.

Four participants explained the CPED's work aided their programs in structuring the sequence and placement of research courses within their curricula, as well as in the redesign of their final research project so it somewhat mirrored that of the CPED's dissertation in practice.

### *Improving the EdD Reputation*

Participants were asked to discuss their beliefs regarding the reputation of the EdD, including their opinion of the reputation, and what may be done to improve the EdD's reputation, for the purposes of this study, with an emphasis in higher education administration. Three of the nine participants did not believe that the EdD has a poor reputation, while one participant believed that this reputation does not apply to the EdD solely, but to the field of higher education as a whole. Another participant indicated other initiatives, councils, associations, and organizations representing the EdD, such as the CPED (for the purposes of this study specifically in higher education administration), need to increase awareness through networking, campaigns, and scholarly research conducted and disseminated through presentations and publications. This participant further named the Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs (CAHEP), a council within ASHE, as an appropriate vehicle for increasing awareness. One of the previously mentioned participants explained his reasoning and decision to pursue an EdD in higher education administration, rather than a PhD. He explained:

I hold an EdD; I have never been one to feel that the EdD has a poor reputation. It was the degree for me and I never saw it as less than a PhD. I just saw it as having different outcomes or different potentials. I was one of those

who, when I started my doctoral degree, never gave faculty work any thought. I was going to work in an administrative career and the EdD was for me, and it was through the doctoral experience that I really began to change my focus onto more faculty work. But I don't think it's got a bad reputation. I know that there is some bias. I tend to think that more EdD programs are being created than PhD, which may speak to the need or want for more of a practice-based degree.

These participants were quick to note they do recognize the bias when compared to the PhD in higher education administration, even though they disagree with this bias. The six remaining participants also noted they do not have a definitive answer to this question, but only some suggestions that could aid in improving the reputation and/or lessening the stigma associated with the EdD in higher education administration, when compared to the PhD in higher education administration.

One participant identified the issue as a cultural one. He explained that one must look past the degree and consider other qualities, such as professional experience, fit within an organization or institution, and what other qualities a person has to offer in each situation. He further stated:

In order to change it, schools have to see the quality of the person, their abilities, and their academic knowledge has prepared them to be specialists in that particular area and it doesn't require a PhD, necessarily. The EdD has its own values for specific jobs.

Another participant mentioned the industrialization of the EdD and how this, when combined with a full-on cohort system, work together to diminish individualization within higher education administration EdD programs. When using the term "full-on

cohort,” this participant meant that her institution’s cohort system is lock step in terms of what courses are taken (with no deviation from this schedule). The students that begin the program cohort together also finish together. And, no other students outside of this cohort are allowed to take courses with these students, which is sometimes allowed in other cohort-type programs. She further explains:

So for me, it’s an institutionalization problem that we’re requiring students to become institutionalized in such a way that by the time they graduate they’re not really agents of change anymore. They know how to work within a system and they know how to get along. And to me, that’s very problematic.

This participant went on to explain that not all aspects of full-on cohort systems are bad. However, knowing that institutionalization is a concern, safeguards can be put into place to reduce any negative impact that may occur.

Moreover, during iteration one of these three focus group discussions, participants inadvertently incorporated all five of Senge’s (2006) disciplines highlighted in his Theory of Learning Organizations. The researcher observed discipline one, systems thinking, when participants worked as a team to answer questions, rather than only thinking and answering independently. They also used the systems thinking approach when they discussed higher education administration EdD programs and curricula, as it is an independent program that functions individually, but oftentimes among other higher education doctoral programs. Participants also exhibited discipline two, personal mastery, as their discussions repeatedly led to examples of their experiences and expertise in the field. Further discussion revealed discipline three, mental models, was a factor during focus group discussions, as participants indicated their responses, during at



least one occasion, were a reflection of what they know, a preconceived notion or model, and not necessarily what they thought was right or best. The fourth discipline, building shared vision, was present during discussions regarding the CPED and other initiatives to further improve the EdD. However, the need for a shared vision was also obvious when participants discussed the need for some consistency or regulatory effort regarding the number and types of research methods courses that should be offered in higher education administration EdD programs. Lastly, Senge's (2006) fifth discipline, team learning, was evident when discussions turned to participants asking one another questions regarding systems, functions, roles, and operations within their own higher education administration EdD programs. Although every discipline was not evident during the discussion of each theme or all three research questions, they were present throughout focus group discussions, particularly in iteration one.

#### Phase I—Iteration II

During the second iteration of focus groups, participants were asked 15 questions that were crafted based on the detail of the answers provided in iteration one. Some questions incorporated into iteration two were based on themes identified from the analysis of iteration one focus group data. The second iteration of focus groups included only eight of the nine original participants due to an unexpected conflict that prevented one of the participant's continued participation. As iteration two continued where iteration one left off, those questions also focused on what instructor participants believe are structures and functions of well-run and respected CPED model EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration.

Additional questions were added that focused on professional academic experience of the instructor participants, as well as their program colleagues. Specific information regarding instructor participants' gender, role within their institution, years of experience teaching in higher education administration EdD programs, and institution type can be found in Table 2.

Throughout the process of conducting the second iteration of focus groups, numerous themes began to emerge, including: 1. how participants' educational backgrounds have influenced their perception of the higher education administration EdD curricula in their programs; 2. how colleagues' educational backgrounds have affected participants' perceptions of their programs' higher education administration EdD curricula; 3. how the educational background of EdD faculty members potentially affect the structure, function, and possibly the reputation of the EdD; 4. why institutions offer the EdD with an emphasis in higher education administration; and 5. what resources, besides CPED materials, would participants use when considering curricular revisions to their higher education administration EdD programs.

#### *Effect of Participants' Education on Program Curricula*

Participants were asked how their educational background influenced their perception of the higher education administration EdD curricula at the institutions in which they are employed. Again, one participant was unavailable during this iteration of focus groups. Of the remaining eight participants, two indicated their educational backgrounds and experiences (see Table 3 below for an overview of participants' educational backgrounds) had little-to-no effect on their perception of the EdD in higher education administration curriculum at their institutions. However, six participants

discussed what they learned, which was a combination of both positive and negative experiences.

Table 3

*Educational background of focus group participants*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degrees</b>	<b>Master's Degrees</b>	<b>Doctoral Degrees</b>
1	Bachelor's in English	Master's in student and post-secondary education	PhD in higher education
2	Bachelor's in English	Master's in curriculum and instruction	PhD in Educational Administration
3	Bachelor's in social and rehabilitative services	Master's in college student personnel services	EdD in higher education
4	Bachelor's in medical technology	Master's in student affairs	PhD in educational leadership and policy
5	Bachelor's in romance languages	Master's in college and student personnel	PhD in higher education administration
6	Bachelor's in education and business	Master's in counseling psychology	EdD in higher education administration
7	Bachelor's in sociology	Master's in higher education and student affairs	EdD in educational policy, planning, and leadership, with a focus on higher education
8	Bachelor's in history education	Master's in religious education	EdD in leadership
9	Bachelor's in religious studies with a minor in classical civilization	Master's in adult and continuing education	PhD in adult and post-secondary education and a JD

Two participants explained their doctoral education had a very positive impact on the perception of their current institutions' curricula. These participants indicated there are many similarities when comparing the curricula from their doctoral education to what

is in place during their tenure as faculty members. Both participants also indicated the curricula used in their doctoral education served as a model for their current programs. These participants agreed they took the best portions of the curricula from their doctoral education and applied it to the curricula they were currently teaching. However, they also had to consider current trends, as well as successes and failures of similar programs. By making changes in the less successful areas, participants believed the result to be more improved and streamlined curricula, programs, and educational experiences.

Two other participants recounted their experiences with program and curricula design during their doctoral education. They compared those experiences with current program and curricular issues, but from a faculty and/or administrator perspective. Both participants identified strengths and weaknesses in curricula throughout the evolution of the higher education administration EdD at their institution, from their personal experiences and perspectives. One participant noted:

On one hand, my background in curriculum and instruction gives me the most insight into the curriculum itself, and I'd say it influences me to think that we're not terribly purposeful in what we're doing. My experience getting a PhD is that we're really not doing much to differentiate between the EdD and PhD. We basically require the same thing of both.

Her colleague, who also holds a PhD, recounts a very different experience than the one previously depicted. She explained:

I will say that I think my doctoral granting institution did differentiate between the PhD and EdD when I was there and certainly since then. I think that has had an influence just knowing what could be done, seeing it done somewhere else—

admittedly at a very well-resourced institution—I do think about it because I know it can be done, but I don't think we're doing it particularly well.

So while those two participants graduated from PhD programs at different institutions, one experienced a program that clearly defined differences in the EdD and PhD, while the other did not. However, both participants agreed that today's higher education administration EdD programs could be improved to further differentiate the purpose, course requirements, and research project required for granting of the EdD.

In addition to discussing their own experiences throughout the doctoral education process and the effect this has had on participants' contributions to curricular design, the conversation was further expanded. Participants also talked about their faculty colleagues' educational experiences and the effect this has had on their programs' higher education administration EdD curricula.

#### *Effect of Participants' Colleagues' Education on EdD Curricula*

Eight of the nine participants who took part in the second iteration of focus groups provided information regarding the educational backgrounds of their programs' faculty members. The number of faculty members per program and institution varied based on the size of the program. However, participants reported more than 30 faculty members, all doctorally prepared, were employed full-time, when programs were combined. Additionally, participants indicated their programs also employed doctorally-prepared adjunct faculty members when needed.

When participants' responses were combined, approximately 12 faculty members held EdDs, 20 faculty members held PhDs, and two faculty members held JDs. The aforementioned faculty members with EdD and PhD degrees were focused on higher

education, educational leadership, or a closely-related area of higher education. Only one faculty member did not have a higher education-related terminal degree, as her PhD area of study was sociology. However, her research focus was higher education, which her institution believed appropriate and adequate for a faculty position in the program for which she was hired. The number of faculty members per doctoral degree type is a close estimate and not exact because participants often described their colleagues as practitioners or researchers, rather than indicating their degree type during focus group discussions. Moreover, participants agreed the number of practitioner-based faculty versus research faculty depended heavily on the institution's emphasis and dependence on research and grant funding.

#### *Effect of Program Faculty's Education on the EdD*

When discussing the effect of colleagues' doctoral education experiences on their program's EdD curricula, participants shared numerous viewpoints. Two participants believed their colleagues' doctoral education backgrounds had no impact on their work as faculty members, including their interactions with students, involvement in curricular changes, and teaching abilities.

One participant elaborated on the various educational experiences on his program, particularly in hiring new faculty members who are recent graduates. He explained that:

One of the challenges we face is that the majority of our faculty studied full-time as students in PhD programs, and three of the six are pretty new tenure track faculty members. So they bring with them their experiences as full-time PhD students to a program that has all working professionals, and an executive model. So understanding capacity issues, and the nature of the students' lives outside the

program, has been an adjustment. I'd also say that, related to the curriculum, we have built a curriculum that we feel is pretty good for our practitioners and some of our faculty have not served as practitioners and are used to more research courses as being part of the curriculum. So we are doing some socialization work. It's just an adjustment. But any new faculty that we hire in the coming years, we'll be looking for more practitioner-focused folks to balance out what we've got in our tenure-track faculty.

Not too different from the previous participant's experience, two other participants indicated their colleagues with EdDs have a better understanding of, and work best with the students, because of their comparable educational and professional experiences. They also believed some type of disconnect existed between PhD faculty members and EdD students, as many PhD faculty came from more traditional programs in which attendance was mostly on a full-time basis. Although there was an identified disconnect on which faculty worked best with the students versus other aspects of the program, both participants were quick to point out that as faculty, regardless of EdD or PhD preparation, they worked well together. They both claimed their differences in educational and professional experiences lent a richness to their programs that would otherwise not exist.

One participant explained her program faculty found it problematic that both higher education administration and educational leadership students are in some of the same courses, rather than having two sections of the same course, one for each EdD emphasis area. She explained that because higher education administration and educational leadership emphasis areas are so different, these courses were seldom as

effective as they could and should have been for the students. More specifically, program faculty believed course content for higher education administration students needed greater emphasis on and more in-depth understanding of finance, administration, and law; whereas, educational leadership students needed more instruction focused on leadership and problems of practice research methods.

And yet another participant's experience differed from the aforementioned accounts in that regardless of program faculty members' doctoral preparation, the crafting of his program's curriculum was very collaborative in nature. He explained:

We were all involved in developing the curriculum. We did borrow it from a program that was ended, but we redeveloped all of it. We worked together to strengthen the learning outcomes because previously they were quite weak. We continue to work together to discuss the curriculum. It's interesting that you asked me to be a part of this because for our annual report for our accreditors, one of the goals that we're working on is an assessment of the curriculum. So we just evaluated the learner-centered outcomes for every course in the curriculum, and asked the students to tell us their perceived importance, and their level of achievement. And we found that the different scores were where we worked. Obviously, the negative scores drew the most attention, but all of the faculty have been involved in that.

These participants had both similar and different experiences in working with their programs' faculty members in the development and revision of their higher education administration EdD curricula. However, participants agreed that regardless of



EdD or PhD preparation, their colleagues all made contributions regarding their program, particularly the curricula.

*Institutional Reasons for Offering the Higher Education Administration EdD*

Participants were asked to discuss the reasons their institutions began offering higher education administration EdD programs. Of the eight participants that reflected on this question, one was unsure, as she was not employed at the time her program was developed.

Four participants explained there was a need in their geographic locations for doctorally-prepared education administrators, and they believed their institutions could create competitively successful programs that would aid in filling this need. The concept of some of these programs was internal, in which institutional administrators detected the need for such a program; whereas, some participants' institutions created their programs because of requests and expressed need outside of the institution, including local and state-level government.

Three participants described the inception of their higher education administration EdD programs as a need from within their institutions. There were employees who wanted and/or needed to pursue additional graduate education. At that time, the only doctoral programs offered were traditional in nature and mostly PhDs, which eliminated those employees wanting to advance their education because their work hours prevented their participation in traditionally-formatted programs. When these institutions added their higher education administration EdD programs, employees were able to earn their doctoral degrees while simultaneously maintaining their full-time job positions. These institutions looked at adding this degree program as a means of aiding their employees,

but also meeting the needs of others employed full-time outside these institutions who were also unable to attend a traditionally-formatted doctoral program. These institutions looked at the addition of such programs as a win-win situation.

#### *Resources Used When Considering Curricular Revisions*

Just as any other academic program, the higher education administration EdD has experienced many cycles of curricular revisions, some internally and/or institutionally-based, while others participated in initiatives such as the CPED. When asked what resources were used in crafting and instituting curricular revisions for their higher education administration EdD programs, two participants indicated they did not know, as they were not employed at their current institution during the time in which curricular revisions occurred. One participant explained her institution was recently accepted into the CPED, with their membership beginning in fall 2017. Another participant explained her institution has put no resources into revising the curriculum of their EdD program. Rather, all available resources for making curricular revisions have been applied solely to the PhD program. Another participant explained her institution recently created several new tenure-track faculty positions for their higher education administration EdD program and it is believed this investment in faculty will aid in upcoming curricular revisions. Two participants indicated their program faculty members were the only resources made available during their programs' curricular revisions. And lastly, one participant indicated that although not a member institution, her program did use the CPED framework when revising their higher education administration EdD curriculum.

Some participants have not had the experience of curriculum revision for various reasons. However, those that have worked to revise their higher education administration

EdD curriculum have done so of their own accord, with little or no institutional support or external resources.

As in iteration one, in the three focus group discussions for iteration two, participants also incorporated all five of Senge's (2006) disciplines highlighted in his Theory of Learning Organizations. Similar to the experience in the first iteration, the researcher observed discipline one, systems thinking, when participants continued to work as a team to answer questions regarding curricula and qualifications to teach in one program versus the other (EdD versus PhD). Participants also exhibited discipline two, personal mastery, when their discussions focused on their individual educations, degree programs, and doctoral-granting institutions. The third discipline, mental models, was again a factor during iteration two, as participants indicated their responses, during at least one occasion, were a reflection of what they know, a preconceived notion or model, and not necessarily what they thought was right or best. The fourth discipline, building shared vision, was present during discussions regarding the importance of fit regarding doctoral preparation for instructing in other doctoral programs. Team learning, Senge's (2006) fifth discipline, was apparent when participants' discussions evolved from individual ideas, to explanations of their institutions' programs, and further to include the vision of a program with combination of the better elements incorporated from one another's programs.

Again, each discipline was not exhibited during the discussion of all themes or research questions; however, they were present throughout each iteration and session of focus groups. Moreover, Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations is explained as more effective when all five disciplines are combined and practiced together. In both

iterations of focus groups, Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations' disciplines are present and working together simultaneously, although unbeknownst to the participants.

#### Phase II—Comparison of Curricula to the CPED Framework

Upon completion of data collection and analysis, the CPED model curricular framework was compared with curricula from participants' institutions. Both the focus groups' results and participants' curricula were compared against the CPED framework to further identify strengths and weaknesses in curricula for EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration. Table 4 (below) identifies the six principles identified by the CPED to be addressed when reframing or revising EdD curricula (and for the purposes of this study, specifically programs with an emphasis in higher education administration). Also in Table 4, are details regarding participants' programs' coursework that aligns, or corresponds with, the guiding principles set forth through the CPED's redesign of the curricular framework for the EdD. To prevent repetition, those program courses of participating programs whose course names were very similar were only listed once.

Table 4

*A comparison of CPED guiding principles and participants' programs' curricula.*

<b>CPED Guiding Principles</b>	<b>Analysis Questions</b>	<b>Average Related Coursework</b>
1. Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice	Is there coursework that addresses these topics?	All nine participants' institutions' curricula incorporated coursework addressing equity, ethics, and social justice, as identified by this first CPED guiding principle. These courses included, but are not limited to: 1. Law in Higher Education; 2. Educational Policy and Inequality in Social and Cultural Context: Integrating Research Traditions; 3. Ethics in Leadership; 4. Legal and Political Issues in Higher Education, 5. Social and Cultural Contexts of Education; 6. Equity and Access in Higher Education; 7. Higher Education Management; 8. Reflective Leadership Practice and Inquiry.
2. Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities	Does the website description of the program reference these ideas?	All nine participants' institutional websites described their programs according to this CPED principle.
3. Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships	Does the website description of the program reference these ideas?	All nine participants' programs' websites described opportunities in which students are able to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities to build partnerships, as described by this third CPED guiding principle.

Table 4 (continued)

<p>4. Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions</p>	<p>Are there required practica or internship courses?</p>	<p>Seven of nine participants' programs provided field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice, using multiple frames for developing meaningful solutions. Some of those required internship or practica courses included: 1. Internship in Higher Education; 2. Internship; 3. Graduate Internship</p>
<p>5. Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge, that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry</p>	<p>Do any of the course titles or descriptions refer to theory and research?</p>	<p>All nine participants' curricula course titles and/or descriptions referred to theory and research, according to this CPED principle. Some of these courses included: 1. Student Development Theory I; 2. Leadership in Higher Education; 3. Institutional Research and Assessment in Higher Education; 4. Reading Research in Higher Education; 5. Qualitative Research in Education: Paradigms Theories, and Exemplars; 6. Introduction to Educational Statistics; 7. Introduction to Educational Research; 8. Qualitative Research in Higher Education Settings; 9. Adult Learning Theory; 10. Theory in Educational Administration; 11. Research in Educational Administration; 12. Understanding and Conducting Research: Effective Schools; 13. Action Research and Grant Writing; 14. Educational Change: Change Theory, Futuring and Creative Planning; 15. Introduction to Systems of Human Inquiry.</p>

Table 4 (continued)

6. Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice	Do any of the course titles or descriptions reference these ideas?	All nine participants' programs' course titles emphasized the generation and use of professional knowledge and practice, according to this sixth CPED guiding principle. Some of these courses included: 1. Reading Research in Higher Education; 2. Mentored Research; 3. Directed Doctoral Study in Higher Education; 4. Institutional Research and Assessment in Higher Education; 5. Cooperative Learning: Research and Practice; 6. Theoretical and Scholarly Perspectives on Workforce Development and Education; 7. Principles and Practices in Higher Education.
--	--	--

*CPED Guiding Principle 1: Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice*

All nine participants' institutions' curricula incorporated coursework addressing equity, ethics, and social justice, as identified by this CPED guiding principle. As an example, one participant stated:

We ... do a social-cultural context class, focusing on understanding systems of equity, which I think is really important given our current educational climate and history ... I also teach a course called Critical Consciousness in student affairs that's really about learning to do social justice and equity work and learning to expand your worldview and think about how we can work from inside the institutions in order to make them better for students that are marginalized and

excluded from them.

*CPED Guiding Principle 2: Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities*

When the nine participants' programs' websites were compared to the criteria outlined in the CPED's guiding principle 2, they all showed evidence of providing these opportunities to their higher education administration EdD students. The following quotations are a few samples of how these nine participants' programs' websites aligned with CPED curricular framework guiding principle 2.

One participant's programs' website stated:

Effective leaders recognize the power of place and context in transforming schools, districts and communities. In the newly redesigned EdD in Educational Studies, specializing in Educational Administration, our unique and innovative ... framework involves a combination of problem-based leading and learning. It includes practicing, planning and problem solving in context. It bridges culture and community, explores creativity and utilizes distinct leadership modules in urban, suburban and rural leadership.

A second study participant's program's website exemplified how it also aligns with this CPED guiding principle. This participant's program's website stated:

Ed.D. in Higher Education students are mid-career professionals from a variety of postsecondary institutional types and settings. These include public and private institutions, community colleges, and state, regional and national governance systems and organizations. Students will be engaged with program faculty and



their cohort in all course content, as well as the individual development and execution of a problem-based dissertation that will benefit them as a postsecondary leader, as well as the organizations they serve. The result: students will graduate as higher education practitioners equipped with the knowledge and skills to solve contemporary problems in their organizations and beyond. Not only will graduates be prepared for advancement within their institutions, systems and organizations, they will also be poised to assume leadership roles within their professions on all levels.

A third participant's program's website also confirmed its alignment with this CPED guiding principle. This participant's program's website stated:

Our degrees in Adult and Higher Education have been developed for those in the fields of adult education, and higher education teaching and administration. These degrees help develop professionals who can add substantially to the field with original and ongoing work as well as perform effectively as practitioners on the job. The Adult and Higher Education program encourages the student/learner to be a participant in the process, to choose directions, and to make worthwhile contributions. This climate of encouragement directly affects the program by providing stimulation and relevance to an individual's educational experience.

*CPED Guiding Principle 3: Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships*

All nine participants' programs' websites described opportunities in which students are able to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to

work with diverse communities to build partnerships, as described by this third CPED guiding principle. One participant's program's website stated:

The academic mission is to prepare and support students through a community of diverse learners in their development as scholar-practitioners, who seek positions in postsecondary educational organizations or governmental agencies.

Accordingly, the proposed graduate studies in Higher Education will enable students to engage actively in the critical reflection and ethical decision-making about current issues and problems in higher education.

Also in accordance with CPED Guiding Principle 3, another participant's program's website indicated:

... [program name] is proud to work with numerous corporate and civic organizations ... through partnerships created in support of our academic programs and student opportunities. The list of the University's partners is long, impressive, and ever expanding ... Our partners provide students with opportunities to experience hands-on involvement in real-world projects, requiring them to hone market-ready skills even before they graduate. Students also experience a variety of work environments and develop a network of industry contacts through these partnerships, so ... graduates often have a competitive edge in the job market. In fact, many of our partners provide valuable internships—which can lead to full-time jobs with the firm or agency.

The following example is the third and final sample of ways in which participants' programs' websites have verified their alignment with CPED Guiding Principle 3. This participant's program's website noted:

The objective of the ... doctoral degree is to prepare, train and educate students to become leaders in the administration of postsecondary institutions, scholars who can bring about greater understanding of higher education, and teachers who can pass on knowledge of the past and equip students with the ability to work with an ever-changing higher education environment in the future. This degree emphasizes preparation for leadership careers in a variety of college and university settings and are oriented toward the application of theory and knowledge development through research. The curriculum also aims toward the development of sophisticated management skills and intelligent, informed leadership.

*CPED Guiding Principle 4: Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions*

An example of the inclusion of this principle in the participants' programs came from the participant who stated:

I agree with the distinction that a PhD program is geared toward the traditional dissertation at the end, and it's usually a five chapter thing or there may be a little bit of variation, but it's basically the same elements. For an EdD, often these people are already mid-career professionals, they're already working in the system, they have problems they want to solve, and it becomes more of an action resource research kind of a thing where you can allow different formats for the end product as opposed to the traditional dissertation.

*CPED Guiding Principle 5: Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge, that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry*

All nine participants' curricula course titles and/or descriptions referred to theory and research, according to this CPED principle. One participant's comment captured the dual emphasis on application and research in this statement:

We modeled our dissertation somewhat after the CPED framework, dissertation and practice, so we have an education research methods course that's an overview to all kinds of research that's acceptable in education...then from there, depending on what they've chosen, we have research residencies every summer where they come to campus and break into groups based on what their methodology is for their particular study.

*CPED Guiding Principle 6: Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice*

All nine participants' programs' course titles emphasized the generation and use of professional knowledge and practice, according to this sixth CPED guiding principle. The bulk of the focus group discussions about how the participants' programs addressed this principle focused on preparing EdD in higher education administration students to generate applicable knowledge to solve real educational problems.

### Summary

This researcher sought to answer the three research questions listed in chapter one, and again at the beginning of chapter four. Data collected and used to answer these questions was a combination of focus group discussions and curricula from focus group

participants whose higher education administration EdD programs were non-CPED member institutions at the time the study was conducted. Data was collected and analyzed for Phase I—Iterations I and II, as well as Phase II, in which non-CPED member institutions curricula in higher education administration EdD programs was compared to the CPED curricular framework.

After the process of data collection and analysis for both phases of the study, the researcher discovered some overlapping themes, identified by both the CPED and study participants, as well as some areas in which more definitive guidelines would have been helpful to many higher education administration programs. Overlapping themes included, but were not limited to: 1. the need for a greater distinction between the EdD and PhD in defining the actual purposes of the EdD when compared to the PhD, as well as terms used to describe the EdD and PhD, and 2. a more consistent and accepted research product, more applicable and appropriate to those intending to become administrative practitioners conducting applied research (Perry, 2012; Purinton, 2012; Redden, 2007).

Although the CPED intentionally crafted their curricular framework, comprised of six guiding principles, to be flexible, allowing room for variation among programs and their individual needs, and therefore applicable to more programs, the researcher asserts there are still too many gaps in the CPED's guidelines, particularly in reference to theoretical and research methods coursework and requirements.

By applying Senge's ("Fifth Discipline, 2006) Theory of Learning Organizations to the higher education administration EdD curricular design work conducted by the CPED, and including the shared visions of participants, suggestions and insight should

lead to recommendations for additional improvements in the curricular work already conducted by the CPED.

## CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

### Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast the curricula of non-CPED member institutions with higher education administration EdD programs against the CPED curricular framework, particularly the six guiding principles, and identify areas needing improvement. The findings of this research study were discussed in chapter four. However, this chapter will provide additional discussion of study findings, the interpretation of those findings, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Phase one of the study consisted of focus groups that were conducted in two iterations. The researcher believes using a qualitative research method, borrowing elements of the Delphi technique (Brüggen & Willems, 2009; Green, 2014; Nabb, 2007), while framing the research method around Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, encouraged an environment in which participants experienced some measure of anonymity that inadvertently increased their comfortability during participation and also enriched the level of detail and honesty in answers and discussions. Further, focus group participants welcomed the experience to both contribute to and learn from their peers, as they appeared to be experiencing many of the same programmatic issues.

The researcher conducted the second phase of the study by comparing the participants' higher education administration EdD curricula against the curricular framework, comprised of six guiding principles, crafted by the CPED. The implications identified through these themes in both phases one and two are discussed later in this chapter.

## General Overview of Findings

Emerging themes from Phase I—Iteration I, included: 1. curricular distinctions between the EdD and PhD in higher education administration programs, including required courses versus elective courses; 2. research methods and the research product in higher education administration EdD programs; 3. the CPED's influence regarding participants' higher education administration EdD program curricula; and 4. improving the EdD reputation (specifically in higher education administration, for the purposes of this study). The following narrative provides more detail regarding participants' comments and possible suggestions pertaining to the aforementioned four themes.

In reference to themes one and two, participants agreed with one another, as well as the literature, that when comparing curricula for these two degree programs, there are commonly more similarities than differences (Basu, 2012; Carlson & Mitchell, 2011; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993; Redden, 2007; Wergin, 2011). More specifically, participants agreed this lack of distinction in theory and research courses, including pedagogical methods for course delivery, go against the original intent and purpose of the EdD. For students seeking a doctoral education that will better prepare them for problem solving, rather than producing original scholarly work, the EdD, using methods of applied or practitioner research, continues to be a better fit than the PhD (Jarvis, 1999; Redden, 2007; Shulman et al., 2006; Zambo, 2011).

Also in accordance with the literature, participants did agree that a research product must be required at the end of the EdD program (Jarvis, 1999; Perry; 2012; Wergin, 2011). However, they were divided on exactly what that research product should look like. Although once again all agreed that applied, or action research, remains



the most appropriate for the EdD (Gardner, 2009; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Offerman, 2011; Wergin, 2011).

Although all participants indicated their higher education administration curricula were closely in-line with the CPED curricular framework (theme three), only about half of the participants indicated the crafting of their curricula was actually influenced by the CPED's curricular framework and six guiding principles. Of those participants who indicated the CPED curricular framework served as a guide in crafting or revising their curricula, it was mostly used in the design of the dissertation in practice.

Overall, participants agreed that regardless of the CPED's initiative, a disconnect continues to exist in defining and differentiating the purpose of the EdD versus the PhD (theme four), in higher education administration. In accordance with the literature, participants remained divided when compared with critics who have both praised and disparaged the EdD in regard to the little action taken, until recently, to improve the rigor, reputation, purpose, or distinctiveness of this doctoral degree (Perry, 2012; Shulman et al., 2006). Moreover, participants did agree that differentiation in EdD and PhD programs in higher education administration, as well as the reputation of the EdD (and possibly the PhD), could be improved if institutions were more purposeful in selecting which degree(s) to offer (EdD, PhD, or both). The following narrative provides additional themes and participants' opinions and suggestions based on the second iteration of focus group questions.

Questions for Phase I—Iteration II were based and crafted on the answers and in-depth discussions from the first iteration of focus groups. Emerging themes for Phase I—Iteration II included: 1. how participants' educational backgrounds have influenced their

perception of the higher education administration EdD curricula in their programs; 2. how colleagues' educational backgrounds have affected participants' perceptions of their programs' higher education administration EdD curricula; 3. why institutions offer the EdD with an emphasis in higher education administration; and 4. what resources, besides CPED materials, would participants use when considering curricular revisions to their higher education administration EdD programs.

Approximately half of the participants were knowledgeable of the CPED's efforts to revitalize the EdD prior to their participation in this study. Prior to attending graduate school, most of the participants believed that the degree in which their faculty members held, EdD versus PhD, made little-to-no difference. Conversely, participants with student advising responsibilities explained that if asked the difference between the EdD and PhD, they explained curricular differences as well as perceived biases, for which they also quickly dispelled by explaining how those biases have been, and continue to be, overcome.

Some participants' institutions provided both the EdD and PhD in higher education administration, while a few indicated their institutions only offered the EdD. Critics continue to argue that the consequence of offering both degrees often results in a generation of ill-prepared education practitioners serving in leadership and administrative capacities (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Nelson & Coorough, 1994; Redden, 2007). However, participants were divided on the offering of both degrees, as well as the results, as they indicated they have seen it done both well and poorly. Participants indicated the success of the degree distinction and student preparation typically depended on institutional resources. In contrast, those participants whose institutions only offered the

EdD in higher education administration indicated they have not experienced some of the problematic issues their peers whose institutions offer both the EdD and PhD in higher education administration have. Moreover, when asked why their institutions offered the higher education administration EdD, some participants concurred with current research in their responses that a local and/or regional need exists (Jackson & Kelley, 2012; Nelson & Coorough, 1994). However, other participants indicated their programs were offered because they tend to be institutional money makers, particularly when offered in an executive format.

Besides why these institutions decided to offer higher education administration EdD programs, participants also discussed methods for remaining current in their field. They explained that connecting with peers, in which they indicated curricular and programmatic discussions were often an instigating factor, was a main source for remaining current regarding particular professional and academic topics of interest. Participants also recognized the CPED's work as a vital resource for remaining up-to-date regarding the overarching status of, and changes in the EdD. However, they still depend on other methods of information as well. Participants indicated that memberships in various higher education administration organizations, networking, and remaining up-to-date with the literature are resources they value as much as the CPED.

In addition to the aforementioned explanations addressing the themes revealed during both iterations of focus groups, the following information provides additional detail regarding how this study answered the research questions for this study.

### Research Question 1

According to participants whose programs are not participating in the CPED, what are the necessary structures and functions of well-run and respected CPED model EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?

Study participants agreed two of the most important and necessary structures of higher education administration EdD programs are external support (i.e., local, state, and regional) and institutional support (i.e., administrative, faculty, and clerical levels).

External support often comes from sources such as federal and state governments, regional higher education consortia, and alumni. External support can affect a program's funding and notoriety. When external support is positive, it can quite literally put an institution or program on the map, so to speak. In contrast, institutional support is generally comprised of administrator, faculty, and clerical assistance. Administrative support can affect every aspect of a program, including, but not limited to, the qualifications and professional academic experience of program faculty, resources necessary for efforts such as curriculum revision, opportunities for faculty development, and clerical support to assist students with general issues, freeing faculty to focus more on advisement and instruction.

One participant provided a better understanding of the structures and functions of well-run and respected higher education administration EdD programs, and how they impact these programs. She explained that a program can be greatly impacted by the type of external and institutional support provided. For instance, a well-funded program that employs nationally recognized faculty members and graduates highly respected students who earn prestigious professional positions in higher education, has a vested interest in

ensuring that the necessary structures for a successful program remain in place. When the appropriate structures are in place, she explained it is easier to ensure the functions of these programs, such as ensuring rigorous curricula, exceptional instruction, faculty development, and student support services, are also in line.

Conversely, another participant explained her institution has the means for an above average structure. Her institution and program are higher education leaders in the state and region, and her program is also a money maker for her institution. Therefore, funding is available for hiring highly qualified faculty. However, the institutional support is somewhat lacking, as the administration places greater emphasis and importance on faculty research and grant proposal development. Therefore, when emphasis could and should be placed on recruiting and hiring the most appropriate and qualified faculty for her higher education administration EdD program, the reality is that those hired are more often than not selected for their experience and success in research, rather than their teaching and mentoring abilities.

#### Research Question 2

How does a sample of existing EdD program curricula in higher education administration, not participating in the CPED, compare to the CPED curricular framework, including the identification of overlapping materials?

When the nine participants' higher education administration EdD curricula were examined and compared against the CPED curricular framework, little difference existed in what participants offered and provided their students versus the CPED's curricular recommendations. The CPED curricular framework, consisting of the following six guiding principles, recommended that EdD program curricula should 1. be framed around

questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice; 2. prepare leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities; 3. provide opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships; 4. provide field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions; 5. be grounded in and develop a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry; and 6. emphasize the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice.

More specifically, nearly all the participants' current curricula for the higher education administration EdD aligned with the six CPED guiding principles. The only deviation from this alignment was that two program participants' curricula did not require students to participate in a practicum or internship experience. However, these programs did require higher education administration EdD students to participate in case studies, as well as other courses, in which an emphasis is placed on instruction and coursework focused on problems of practice within their own communities. One of these participants stated his program did not require a practicum or internship of their EdD in higher education administration students because it was assumed these students were already practitioners.

### Research Question 3

As compared to the CPED curricular framework, what are the identified recurring areas needing improvement, based on a sample of existing non-CPED participating EdD programs with an emphasis in higher education administration?

When examining and comparing non-CPED member institution curricula, particularly for higher education administration EdD programs, the following recurring areas were identified as needing improvement: 1. greater differentiation between EdD and PhD curricula in higher education administration programs; 2. greater differentiation in curricula and pedagogical methods for EdD programs in higher education administration versus EdD programs in educational leadership; 3. greater distinction between the type and number of theory and research methods courses required for EdD and PhD programs in higher education administration; and 4. a need for faculty teaching research methods courses to be trained, experienced in, and pedagogically prepared in teaching these courses from an action research point-of-view, rather than a scholarly research perspective.

### Summary

This qualitative research study was conducted to learn more about higher education administration EdD curricula by gauging the knowledge and practices of faculty members teaching in these programs across the country. Specifically, this study looked at the structures and functions of well-run and respected higher education administration EdD programs not participating in the CPED whose curricula was compared to the model CPED curricular framework for identification of similarities, differences, and overlapping materials.

Although the population sample was not a large one, study criteria played a role in eliminating many potential participants. However, those that participated were energetic and forthcoming as they shared their experiences of serving as administrators and teaching in their institutions' higher education administration EdD programs. Although participants' program curricula were similar to one another, as well as the CPED curricular framework, distinctions were recognized and noted.

### Conclusions

A qualitative research method that borrowed elements of the Delphi technique (Keeney, Hasson, McKenna, 2011) and employed focus groups was an appropriate research method for working with participants and collecting information regarding their higher education administration EdD curricula. This study design, in conjunction with the application of Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, was complimentary with the methods set forth by the CPED. The CPED's (2016, "About Us") study design was created to serve and strengthen efforts through a systematic team approach, much like Senge's (2006) Theory of Learning Organizations, as their research efforts included participants who were all leaders in their fields. Participants in this study all functioned within their institutions, as well as in these focus groups, both collaboratively and as visionaries, whose sole purpose was to brainstorm and provide ideas for further improving the EdD, specifically in higher education administration (Senge, 2006).

When participants reviewed the CPED curricular framework document they were required to read before participating in the study, they all indicated their program curricula were closely in-line with the CPED's recommendations, including those participants who were and were not already familiar with the CPED's work.



Additionally, participants recognized that while there is less research regarding the EdD when compared to the PhD, there are even fewer studies pertaining specifically to the higher education administration EdD, when compared to studies and initiatives focused specifically on the educational leadership (K-12) EdD (Wergin, 2011). Further, many of the themes that emerged and discussions that occurred during the study were not new in regards to the long and ongoing debate regarding the purpose, rigor, and credibility of the EdD (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Redden, 2007; Townsend, 2002). However, the work of the CPED to revitalize the EdD remains one of the few efforts in existence to address and improve both the rigor and reputation of the EdD (Perry, 2012, Shulman et al., 2006). Participants agreed more collaborative efforts are needed to further assess and revise EdD curricula, making certain the needs of the students are indeed being met, and the future of higher education administration will be a positive one, due in part to efforts such as these.

To achieve some kind of consistency in the requirements and acceptance processes as well as curricular design in higher education administration EdD programs, rigorous regulations, requirements, and standards are needed. Without national standards or an accrediting body of some form to ensure stability across universities and programs, the current status of the EdD (for the purposes of this study, in higher education administration) will remain as it is today (Wergin, 2011).

### Implications

Implications for the CPED include, but are not limited to a need for additional work to further identify theory and research methods courses, including appropriate pedagogical methods of delivery, for EdD programs in higher education administration as well as educational leadership (K-12). Similarly, additional work is needed to ensure

academicians, and the higher education community as a whole, are made aware of the potential rigor and strengths that can be infused into EdD curricula through CPED efforts. Additional awareness efforts regarding the CPED's work to more clearly delineate the purpose of EdD versus the PhD are also recommended. Lastly, there is a need for a clear distinction and additional research and dissemination of knowledge regarding the EdD in higher education administration versus the EdD in educational leadership.

Although the CPED's curricular framework was flexible enough to allow for variance, dependent upon individual programs, participants' programs' faculty still remain perplexed and uncertain what and how to improve their program's curriculum. Additionally, the CPED must create a greater presence in the higher education community regarding their work and the potential for program improvement by acknowledging and possibly implementing principle guidelines within their curricular framework. More awareness needs to be made, but also enforced, regarding the purpose of and requirements for earning an EdD versus a PhD in higher education administration. And lastly, the CPED must work to more clearly distinguish the purpose, coursework, and needs of EdD program in higher education administration versus the EdD in educational leadership.

Implications for participants' programs include, but are not limited to these needs: disseminating information regarding the success of their programs; participating in additional studies and research, and sharing their experiences, regarding the importance of the higher education administration EdD program; and continuously evaluating their programs to ensure they are providing the best educational opportunities possible to their students.

Participants' programs were already well-designed, respected, and amply funded. While participants were heavily involved in every aspect of their programs, from advisement to course delivery, it would be advantageous for their experiences to be shared with the higher education administration academic community. And lastly, the programs, as would any, would benefit from continuously evaluating their programs through various methods, including but not limited to, student enrollment rates, student satisfaction, and student employment rates upon graduation.

#### Recommendation for Future Research

As a result of this study, the researcher has made the following recommendations for future research: 1. It is recommended that a study with CPED member institution participants, with EdD degrees in higher education administration, be conducted to survey their member participation throughout the curricular revision experiences. 2. It is recommended that a comprehensive historical study be conducted to learn and document more information specifically about higher education administration EdD programs across the United States. 3. It is also recommended that additional studies are needed to further distinguish the EdD in higher education administration from the PhD in higher education administration, particularly focusing on the purpose and mission of programs, compared to the curricula and pedagogical methods used in instructional delivery. 4. Another recommendation is that additional research be conducted to determine whether EdD programs in higher education administration and EdD programs in educational leadership (K-12) need additional differentiation in descriptions, course offerings, and pedagogical methods used in instructional delivery. 5. The fourth recommendation is that additional research is needed to aid in determining whether doctoral degree preparation

(EdD versus PhD) affects one's preparation and/or ability to teach in one doctoral program type over the other (EdD versus PhD).

## APPENDIX A – Institutional Review Board Approval



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

---

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board)

**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17010401

PROJECT TITLE: A Delphi Study of the Curricula for the Doctor of Education (EdD)

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Rebecca Holland

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Educational Research and Administration

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 01/05/2017 to 01/04/2018

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**  
**Institutional Review Board**

## APPENDIX B – Invitation To Participate In Focus Groups

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi conducting a Delphi research study regarding the curricula of the Education Doctorate (EdD). I am interested in talking with doctorally-prepared full-time instructors whose institutions have an EdD program in higher education administration, but do not participate in the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED).

I would like to invite you to participate in a couple of short focus groups. First, you will be asked to read a two-page document explaining the work of the CPED. Secondly, you will be asked to participate with three or four other participants in the first recorded focus group that will consist of nine open-ended questions.

Because participants will be located across the United States, the focus groups will be conducted and recorded via Skype. Each focus group should take no longer than 45 minutes. After conducting each focus group, the session will be transcribed. Transcripts of the focus groups in which you participate will be shared with you so you may read the document and verify its accuracy. Once answers from the first set of focus groups are collected, the responses will be analyzed. The questions for the second focus group will be constructed after the analysis of the first focus group responses is conducted. Again, responses from the second set of focus groups will be collected and analyzed. After analysis of the second focus group responses, the researcher will determine whether a third iteration of questions and focus groups will be necessary. Only if necessary will questions be crafted to be asked during a third set of focus groups.

After the data is analyzed, the results of this study will be compiled and used in preparing my final dissertation document. A final copy of the dissertation will be submitted to my dissertation committee members, Drs. Lilian Hill, Eric Platt, Tom O'Brien, and Kyna Shelley, as well as the Graduate School at The University of Southern Mississippi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Results of the study may be submitted for presentation or publication.

Upon agreeing to participate in this study, you will be emailed an informed consent form. This form would must be signed and returned by email or US postal mail service.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this project, please contact me at [rebecca.holland@usm.edu](mailto:rebecca.holland@usm.edu) or (601) 606.6206.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca C. Holland

## APPENDIX C – CPED Framework for EdD Redesign

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), which began in 2007, is a consortium of over 80 colleges and schools of education that have committed resources to work together to undertake a critical examination and redesign of the doctorate in education (EdD) through dialog, experimentation, critical feedback and evaluation.

Through a collaborative, authentic process, members of CPED developed a Framework for EdD program design/redesign that supports creating quality, rigorous practitioner preparation while honoring the local context of each member institution. The CPED Framework consists of three components—a new definition of the EdD, a set of guiding principles for program development and a set of design-concepts that serve as program building blocks.

Members enter the Consortium at points of considering a new EdD. As they engage in the Consortium, they utilize this Framework to design/redesign, evaluate and improve their programs. CPED members are often at different levels in the design/redesign process.

### **CPED Framework for EdD Redesign Definition of the Education Doctorate**

As a result of our work, 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.”

### **Guiding Principles for Program Design**

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

The Professional doctorate in education:

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

## Design-Concepts upon which to build programs

### Headquartered at the University of Pittsburgh

[www.cpedinitiative.org](http://www.cpedinitiative.org)

To build an EdD program upon these program principles, CPED members have defined a set of design concepts, which include:

*Scholarly Practitioner:* Scholarly Practitioners blend practical wisdom with professional skills and knowledge to name, frame, and solve problems of practice. They use practical research and applied theories as tools for change because they understand the importance of equity and social justice. They disseminate their work in multiple ways, and they have an obligation to resolve problems of practice by collaborating with key stakeholders, including the university, the educational institution, the community, and individuals.

*Signature Pedagogy:* Signature Pedagogy is the pervasive set of practices used to prepare scholarly practitioners for all aspects of their professional work: “to think, to perform, and to act with integrity” (Shulman, 2005, p.52). Signature pedagogy includes three dimensions, as articulated by Lee Shulman (2005):

1. Teaching is deliberate, pervasive and persistent. It challenges assumptions, engages in action, and requires ongoing assessment and accountability.
2. Teaching and learning are grounded in theory, research, and in problems of practice. It leads to habits of mind, hand, and heart that can and will be applied to authentic professional settings.
3. Teaching helps students develop a critical and professional stance with a moral and ethical imperative for equity and social justice.

*Inquiry as Practice:* Inquiry as Practice is the process of posing significant questions that focus on complex problems of practice. By using various research, theories, and professional wisdom, scholarly practitioners design innovative solutions to address the problems of practice. At the center of Inquiry of Practice is the ability to use data to understand the effects of innovation. As such, Inquiry of Practice requires the ability to gather, organize, judge, aggregate, and analyze situations, literature, and data with a critical lens.

*Laboratories of Practice:* Laboratories of Practice are settings where theory and practice inform and enrich each other. They address complex problems of practice where ideas—formed by the intersection of theory, inquiry, and practice—can be implemented, measured, and analyzed for the impact made. Laboratories of Practice facilitate



transformative and generative learning that is measured by the development of scholarly expertise and implementation of practice.

*Dissertation in Practice:* The Dissertation in Practice is a scholarly endeavor that impacts a complex problem of practice.

*Problem of Practice* is as a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience, and outcomes.

---

**Headquartered at the University of Pittsburgh**

[www.cpedinitiative.org](http://www.cpedinitiative.org)

## APPENDIX D – Focus Group Questions Iteration One

1. What do you believe are the most significant curricular distinctions between the EdD and PhD higher education administration programs?
2. What curricular revisions need to be made to make the EdD distinct from the PhD in higher education administration programs?
3. What courses do you believe should be required and what courses should be electives in higher education administration EdD programs?
4. What kind of research or methodology courses do you believe should and should not be included in EdD higher education administration programs?
5. Many doctoral programs, both EdD and PhD, make use of a standard dissertation process. Do you believe that this standard dissertation is an adequate capstone project in higher education administration EdD programs? Or, are there better alternatives that would be more appropriate?
6. What do you believe needs to be done in order to improve the reputation of the EdD in higher education administration?
7. What is your level of knowledge regarding the CPED?
8. The CPED has published reports on the current status, and made recommendations for, the revitalization of the EdD. What information, and/or suggestions, are needed to further enhance this initiative?
9. How has the CPED's curricular framework influenced your EdD program curriculum in higher education administration?

## REFERENCES

- Al-Abri, R. K., & Al-Hashmi, I. S. (2007). The Learning Organisation and Health Care Education. *Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal*, 7(3), 207-214.
- Alavi, S. B., & McCormick, J. (2004). A cross-cultural analysis of the effectiveness of the Learning Organization model in school contexts. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 18(7), 408-416. doi:10.1108/09513540410563112
- Akins, R. B., Tolson, H., & Cole, B. R. (2005). Stability of response characteristics of a Delphi panel: Application of bootstrap data expansion. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 5(37). doi:10.1186/1471-2288-5-37
- Archbald, D. (2011, Spring). The emergence of the nontraditional doctorate: A Historical overview. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 129, 7-19. doi:10.1002/ace.396
- Argyris, A., & Schön. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Baez, B. (2002, November). Degree of distinction: The Ed.D. or the Ph.D. in Education. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Sacramento, California.
- Barnes, J. B., & Austin, A. E. (2009). The role of doctoral advisors: A look at advising from the advisor's perspective. *Innovative Higher Education*, 33, 297-315.
- Basu, K. (2012, March 29). The country's oldest EdD program will close down. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/03/29/country%E2%80%99s-oldest-edd-program-will-close-down>

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Boudah, D. H. (2011). *Conducting Educational Research: Guide to Completing a Major Project*.
- Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Brüggen, E., & Willems, P. (2009). A critical comparison of offline focus groups, online focus groups and e-Delphi. *International Journal of Market Research*, 51, 363-381.
- Caldwell, R. (2011). Leadership and learning: A critical reexamination of Senge's Learning Organization. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 25, 39-55.  
doi:10.1007/s11213-011-9201-0
- Carlson, J. A., & Mitchell, D. (2011). Characterizing the touchstone of educational leadership: An analysis of distinguished applied doctorate programs. *The Academic Leadership Journal*, 9(4). Retrieved from:  
<http://works.bepress.com/donaldmitchelljr/1/>
- The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). (2016). About Us. Available at: [cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/page/AboutUs](http://cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/page/AboutUs)
- The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). (2016). Design Concept Definitions. Available at: [cpedinitiative.org/design-concept-definitions](http://cpedinitiative.org/design-concept-definitions)
- The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). 2016. Development of the CPED Working Principles. Available at: [cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/?PageHistoryPrinciples](http://cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/?PageHistoryPrinciples)

- The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). 2016. Framework. Available at: [https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/CPED\\_Framework.pdf](https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/CPED_Framework.pdf)
- The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). (2016). Research & Resources. Available at: <https://cpedinitiative.site-ym.com/page/researchresources>
- Clifford, G. J., & Guthrie, J. W. (1988). *Ed School: A brief for professional education*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cremin, L. A. (1978, February). *The education of the education professions*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Chicago, IL.
- Fillion, G., Koffi, V., & Ekionea, J. B. (2015). Peter Senge's Learning Organization: A critical view and the addition of some new concepts to actualize theory and practice. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 19(3), 73-102.
- Fischer, L., & Gupton, J. (2011). Exploring effective support practices for doctoral students' degree completion. *College Student Journal*, 45(2), 310-323.
- Freire, Paulo. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power and liberation*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
- Gardner, H., & Shulman, L. S. (2005, Summer). The professions in America today: Crucial but fragile. *Daedalus*, 134(3), 13-18.
- Gardner, S. (2009, April). The development of doctoral students. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 34(6). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Gephart, M. A., Marsick, V. J., Van Buren, M. E., & Spiro, M. S. (1996). Learning organizations come alive. *Training and Development*, 50(12), 34-45.
- Giesecke, J., & McNeil, B. (2004). Transitioning to the learning organization. *Library Trends*, 53(1), 54-67).
- Goodlad, J. L. (1990). *Teachers for our nation's schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Green, R. A. (2014, April). The Delphi Technique in Educational Research. *Sage Open*, 4(2). doi:10.1177/2158244014529773
- Harvard University. (2017). Historical Facts. Available at:  
[www.harvard.edu/about-harvard-glance/history/historical-facts](http://www.harvard.edu/about-harvard-glance/history/historical-facts)
- Jackson, B. L., & Kelley, C. (2002, April). Exceptional and innovative programs in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(2), 192-212.
- Janghorban, R., Roudsari, R. L., & Taghipour, A. (2014). Skype interviewing: The new generation of online synchronous interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 9, 1-3.  
doi:10.3402qhw.v9.24152
- Jarvis, P. (1999). *The practitioner-researcher: Developing theory from practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Keeney, S., Hasson, F., & McKenna, H. (2011). *The Delphi Technique in Nursing and Health Research*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kerfoot, K. (2005). Learning Organizations need teachers: The leader's challenge. *Urologic Nursing*, 25(3), 227-229.

- Klenowski, V., Ehrich, L., Kapitzke, C., & Trigger, K. (2011, December). Building support for learning with a Doctor of Education programme. *Teaching in Higher Education, 16*(6), 681-693.
- Kuipers, J. (2011, Spring). PhD and EdD degrees for mid-career professionals: Fielding Graduate University. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 129*, 63-73. doi:10.1002/ace.401
- Lapan, S. D., Quartaroli, M. T., & Riemer, F. J. (2012). *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Designs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lawler, A., & Sillitoe, J. (2013). Facilitating 'organizational learning/ in a 'learning organization.' *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 35*(5), 495-500. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2013.825415
- Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders*. New York: Education Schools Project.
- Martinez-Lebron, C. (2016). PhD and EdD degrees in higher education programs: A mixed-methods study. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (10196329)
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nabb, L. W. (2007). Probing the question of legal content in adult education master's level graduate curricula: A Delphi study. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (3259789)
- National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences. (2015, December). *Doctorate recipients from US universities 2014*. (NSF Publication No. 16-300). Retrieved from NSF website: [www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/)

- Nelson, J. K., & Coorough, C. (1994, Winter). Content analysis of the PhD versus EdD dissertation. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(2), 158-168.
- O'Callaghan, P. (2011, Spring). The development of a new doctoral degree program to serve an adult audience: Georgetown University. *New Directions for Adult Continuing Education*, 129, 53-61. doi:10.1002/ace.400
- Offerman, M. (2011, Spring). Profile of the nontraditional doctoral degree student. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 129, 21-30. doi:10.1002/ace.397
- Okoli, C., & Pawlowski, S. D. (2004). The Delphi Method as a research tool: An example, design considerations and applications. *Information & Management*, 42, 15-29. doi:10.1016/j.im.2003.11.002
- O'Neil, J. (1995, April). On schools as learning organizations: A conversation with Peter Senge. *Educational Leadership*, 52(7), 20-23.
- Osguthorpe, R., & Wong, M. J. (1993). The Ph.D. versus the Ed.D.: Time for a decision. *Innovative Higher Education*, 18(1), 47-63.
- Perry, J. A. (2012, September). To EdD or not to EdD? Retrieved from: [cpedinitiative.org/articles/edd-or-not-edd](http://cpedinitiative.org/articles/edd-or-not-edd)
- Powell, A. G. (1980). *The uncertain profession*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Purinton, T. (2012, May 16). The EdD Dilemma. *Education Week*, 31(31), 24-25.
- Queeney, D. S. (1995). *Assessing Needs in Continuing Education: An Essential Tool for Quality Improvement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.



- Redden, E. (2007, April 10). Envisioning a new EdD. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/04/10/education>
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Senge, P. M. (2006). The leader's new work: Building learning organizations. In Gallos, J. V. (Ed.), *Organization development* (pp. 765-792). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Senge, P. M., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R. B., & Smith, B. J. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Shulman, L. S., Golde, C. M., Bueschel, A. C., & Garabedian, K. J. (2006, April). Reclaiming Education's Doctorate's: A critique and proposal. *Educational Researcher*, 25-32.
- Stitt-Gohdes, W. L., & Crews, T. B. (2004, Spring). The Delphi Technique: A research strategy for career and technical education. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 20(2), 55-67.
- Sullivan, J. R. (2012). Skype: An appropriate method of data collection for qualitative interviews? *The Hilltop Review*, 6(1). Retrieved from: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/hilltopreview/vol6/iss1/10>
- Thelin, J. R. (2011). *A history of American higher education*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Townsend, B. (2002, November). *Rethinking the EdD, or what's in a name?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Sacramento, CA.
- Valerin, M. P. (2011, December). *Comparative analysis of 105 higher education doctoral programs in the United States* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. (3529262)
- Visser, M., & Van der Togt, K. (2015). Learning in public sector organizations: A Theory of Action approach. *Public Organization Review*, 16, 235-249. doi:10.1007/s11115-015-0303-5
- Wergin, J. F. (2011). Rebooting the EdD. *Harvard Educational Review*, 81(1), 119-139.
- West, I., Gokalp, G., Pena, A. E., Fischer, L., & Gupton, J. (2011). Exploring effective support practices for doctoral students' degree completion. *College Student Journal*, 45(2), 310-323.
- Zambo, D. (2011). Action research as signature pedagogy in an education doctorate program: The reality and hope. *Innovative Higher Education*, 36, 261-271. doi:10.1007/s10755-010-9171-7
- Zambo, R., Zambo, D., Buss, R. R., Perry, J. A., & Williams, T. R. (2014). Seven years after the call: Students' and graduates' perceptions of the re-envisioned EdD. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39, 123-137. doi:10.1007/s10755-013-9262-3