

Executive Ed.D. Program Experiences

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Agenda

1. Introduction / Significance
2. Literature Review
3. Research Questions
4. Theoretical Framework
5. Research Methodology
6. Preliminary Findings
7. Observations
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1. Introduction / Significance

- There are numerous Education doctoral programs across the country (Scott et al., 2004; Topolka-Jorrisen & Wang, 2015; Young, 2006).
- The variety of programs confuses administrators, faculty, and students (Leist & Scott, 2011; Orr, 2015, Zambo et al., 2014).
- Ed.D. students often have different expectations than Ph.D. students (Gardner, 2009; Levine, 2007; Perry, 2011; Zambo et al., 2014).
- Understanding student expectations might lead to programs that better meet student expectations and improved outcomes.

2. Literature Review

- There is little difference between Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs across and within institutions (Walker et al., 2008; Perry, Zambo, & Wunder, 2015).
- While the Ed.D. was intended for practitioners, many Ed.D. programs lack real-world focus (Orr, 2015).
- Both Ed.D. and Ph.D. students often choose careers unrelated to research (Zambo et al., 2014).
- Executive Programs target mid-career administrators who aspire to senior leadership. These programs develop leadership, networking, and change management skills (Caboni & Proper, 2009).
- Higher education leadership, community building and financial management skills are needed at all institutional levels (Bowen & McPherson, 2016).

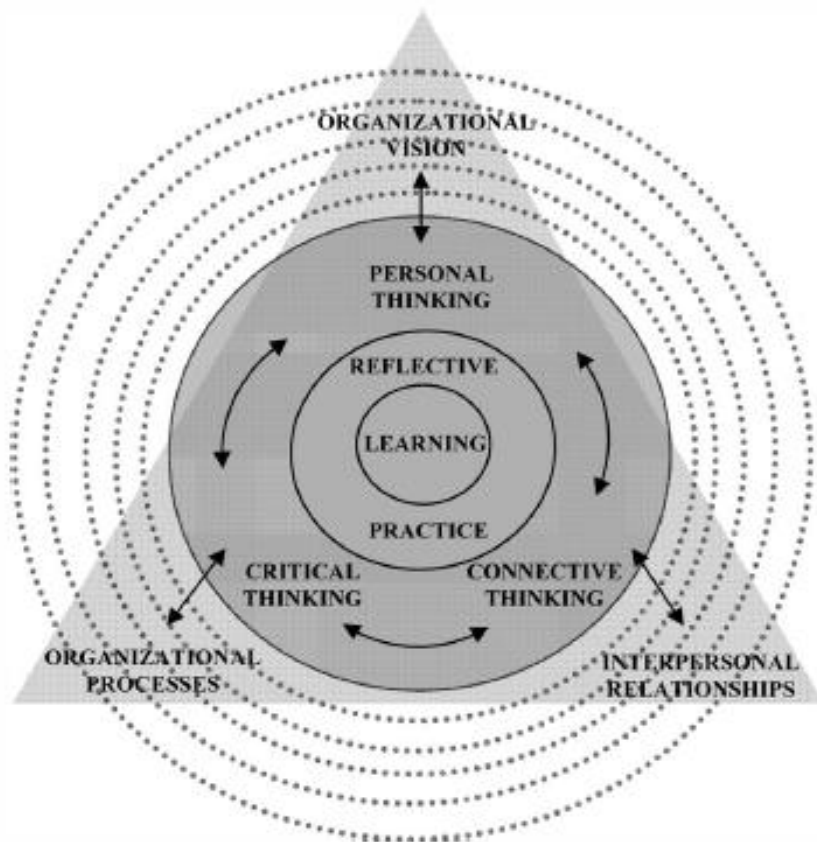
3. Research Question –

How do people with expertise in executive leadership assess and critique current executive Ed.D. programs in higher education and what future developments and changes for these programs do they anticipate?

4. Theoretical Framework

- Reflective thinking (Dewey, 1934), extended to practice by Schon (1987).
- Kolb learning style and cycle: Experience, Reflection, Hypothesis, Testing, and repeat (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).
- Reflective executive framework applied to executive business education (De Dea Roglio & Light, 2009).
- Three ways of thinking: connective, critical, and personal to make sense of knowledge, skill, and practice.

4. Reflective Executive Framework (De Dea Roglio & Light, 2009)



Features

1. Adult learning principles.
2. Instructor as guide.
3. Collective learning.
4. Interdisciplinary curriculum

5. Research Methodology

- **Phenomenology** – Interview executive Ed.D. program alumni, administrators and experts. Qualitative approach can inform findings of recent Ed.D. program survey (Zambo et. al., 2014).
- **Publicly available material** – Online marketing, YouTube videos, program websites
- **Interviews** – Use public information to identify appropriate participants extend through snowball sampling
- **Reflection** and journaling throughout collection and analysis.
- **Peer review** including conferences (AERA, ASHE, THES)

5. Methodology – Sampling Limitations

Advantages

- Accessibility when population details are not easily available.
- Simple, easy to implement, and cost-effective.
- Few resources required.

Disadvantages

- Limited control regarding who participates.
- Representativeness of population is unclear.
- Incurs sampling bias particularly when like-minded participants nominate one another.

5. Methodology – Interview Guides

Alumni

- The student experience.
- Program decision.
- Network experiences.
- Program elements.
- Demographics.

Administrators / Experts

- The administrator experience.
- Peer and student networking.
- Program considerations.
- Demographics.

6. Preliminary Findings – Comparators

	A	B	C	D
Program Goal	Institutional Leadership	Career Advancement	Accelerated program	Global Connections
Term	2 years	3 years	2 years	2 years
Dissertation	Dissertation	Capstone Project	Dissertation	Dissertation
Electives / Cognate	No	No	No	No
Student profile	National	National	Local / Regional	International
Cost	\$110k / year	\$30k / year	\$30 - \$50k / year	\$70/ year

6. Emerging Elements

- **Pedagogy** – Curriculum, Logistics and Scheduling
- **Program Evolution** – History and Future Issues
- **Program Reputation** – Faculty, Rankings and Outcomes
- **Support Systems** – Student supports before, during and after graduation

6. Emerging Themes (paraphrased)

- **Transformational** – Program was more than I expected.
- **Intensely challenging** – I did not expect the program to be so difficult, but I am glad I did it.
- **Required** – I needed the credential. I wanted to be challenged in my job.
- **Exceptional** – The program, faculty and peers were outstanding.

6. Emerging Themes (paraphrased)

- **Market Driven** – We know our students, what they want, why they're here.
- **Responsive** – We know the marketplace and have developed the program to deliver the goods.
- **Different Mindset** – The program must connect with students as practitioners.
- **Connections** – We must (want to / need to) remain connected to our graduates.

7. Observations

- As Ed.D. programs become more market focused, there is less distinction between executive and traditional programs.
- Technology facilitates better connectivity; however, students value the cohort experience (in the classroom).
- International experiences deepen relationships within the cohort. These relationships extend long past graduation.
- Leadership remains a key focus of executive programs and students value practical leadership learning experiences.

8. Next Steps

- Continue to interrogate / analyze the data.
- Reconfirm observations with participants as needed.
- Map findings within theoretical framework (reflective executive / critical friend theory).
- Begin writing!