"It's My Job:" Graduate Student Socialization and Career Choice

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“IT’S MY JOB:”

GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIALIZATION AND CAREER CHOICE

A Dissertation in Practice
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Higher Education
The University of Mississippi

by

MEGAN E. BLACK

May 2023
ABSTRACT

The purpose of planning this evaluation is to explore perspectives of graduate student socialization to practitioner careers in students’ fields of study. Socialization in graduate programs refers to the process by which students learn and adapt to the norms and expectations of their anticipated career fields, and the activities within programs that provide related information and practice. Higher education in the United States has been undergoing a long-term change in which full-time, tenured faculty positions are becoming increasingly rare, with many new doctoral graduates relegated to non-tenure track adjunct positions. Also of note is the growing number of doctoral students who begin their programs with no intention of pursuing academic employment, but instead choose to begin or continue practitioner careers. More doctoral graduates than ever are therefore seeking employment outside academe, which raises questions about how doctoral programs are providing adequate socialization for non-academic, practitioner careers. Using socialization as a lens through which to evaluate graduates’ preparedness for practitioner careers allows for distinctions to be made between traditional Ph.D. programs and Ed.D. programs in terms of socialization practices and graduate outcomes. Undertaking a qualitative study including faculty, students, and recent graduates of Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs will explore their perspectives on graduate student socialization and the extent to which students are being socialized as practitioners in their fields of study.
DEDICATION

For my parents, who believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself.

For Nanny, Papaw, and Bonnie, who would have been proud.

For B.B., W.O., and T.H.: steadfast friends who have put up with my complaints during this writing process and supported me every step of the way.
I would like to acknowledge, with my deepest gratitude, my DiP committee: Dr. Amy Wells Dolan, Dr. Macey Edmondson, Dr. Mandy Perryman, and Dr. Whitney Webb. Their guidance and support has been invaluable. I have had the privilege of knowing them first as colleagues, then as their student, and my esteem for them has only grown during that time.

A special thanks to George Strait, whose music provided the soundtrack to my work.
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LIST OF TERMS & DEFINITIONS

**Formal socialization**: Socialization that takes place within an academic program, as part of a curricular or co-curricular requirement. Direct, planned instruction or experiences aimed at teaching career-related skills and norms (e.g., classes, internships, study groups).

**Informal socialization**: Socialization that takes place outside an academic program, not included as part of a curricular or co-curricular requirement. Socialization that tends to happen incidentally (e.g., conversations with advisors or faculty, peers, or those in an anticipated career field; shadowing a professional in an anticipated career field; visiting a potential employer).

**Professional socialization**: The process by which individuals become members of professional environments or cohorts by learning the skills, norms, expectations, and values of them.

**Socialization**: The process by which individuals learn the skills, norms, expectations, and values of their anticipated environment or community.
Manuscript 1: Literature Review
**Introduction**

In the past twenty years, the United States has seen a significant rise in the number of students earning doctoral degrees, though there has been some leveling since 2018 (Duffin, 2021). With this increase in the number of doctoral students, questions regarding their career aspirations have arisen, especially as the number of full-time, tenured faculty roles in US colleges and universities has been steadily decreasing (American Association of University Professors, 2018; Government Accountability Office, 2017; Haaf, 2001.; Moore, 2019) in favor of part-time and contingent faculty who, by definition, are ineligible for tenure. The traditional route for doctoral graduates has, therefore, been significantly limited by circumstances within higher education; however, it is also important to acknowledge that many doctoral students are self-selecting out of academic employment and are instead entering doctoral programs with the intention of continuing their practitioner roles. With fewer academic careers available to larger numbers of doctoral graduates, and more doctoral students interested in continuing their careers in their fields of study, there is some concern about whether doctoral programs are adequately preparing students to continue and advance in their practitioner roles. Specifically, whether traditional and nontraditional doctoral programs are succeeding in socializing their students to practitioner-based endeavors, rather than the more established academic route.

Partially in response to the evolving landscape of doctoral studies, the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) has developed a framework by which faculty can create or redesign Ed.D. programs to develop “quality, rigorous practitioner preparation while honoring the local context of each member institution” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). In their framing of the Ed.D., CPED has focused on preparing doctoral students to enter or continue practitioner careers in education, and the programmatic elements necessary for that
preparation. Doctoral program pedagogy is a main concern of the CPED Framework, the dimensions of which focus on teaching and learning to form appropriate professional habits, as are both the Problem of Practice and Dissertation in Practice, which allow students to reflect on “persistent, contextualized, and specific issue[s] embedded” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b) within their work as professional practitioners. The CPED Framework also directly addresses mentoring and advising in Ed.D. programs, requiring from programs “attention that centralizes students’ needs and problems of practice in learning while valuing the practitioner student as unique” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). The elements of these design concepts align almost exactly with the concept of professional socialization within graduate programs, which was best articulated by Weidman et al. (2001) as “the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career” (p. iii).

Socialization plays a significant role in many aspects of graduate student development and success, particularly as it concerns students’ interpersonal interactions and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Weidman, 2015). It stands to reason, then, that socialization may also be a factor influencing graduate student career success. Further, with the popularization of CPED-aligned Ed.D. programs as an alternative to traditional Ph.D. programs, there is the added advantage of exploring the socialization efforts existent in different kinds of doctoral education, as well as the career-related outcomes of graduates. Identifying the similarities and differences in socialization for students in different doctoral programs will give insight to both potential changes to recommend, but also to how different models of socialization affect students both during and after their academic careers.
In the literature review that follows, a framework of four elements relating to graduate student socialization and career choice is established using existing research and literature. To get the most relevant and comprehensive foundation, the literature included relates to graduate student socialization; career choice-related influences on graduate students; graduate student career choice; and the CPED framework.
Guiding Problem and Questions

This evaluation will explore perspectives on graduate student socialization and the extent to which students are being socialized as practitioners in their fields of study. The goals of this evaluation are: 1) to explore students’ confidence in their career preparation during their programs and post-graduation; 2) to gain insight into how graduate programs prepare students for careers outside the faculty, and; 3) to find areas in which programmatic changes could be made to benefit students’ career outcomes.

To meet these goals and collect data that will allow positive impact on doctoral programs and students, it is necessary to focus on a specific set of questions to guide the evaluation. In developing these questions, three main areas of inquiry have been kept at the forefront: program/faculty socialization efforts; students’ perceptions of and feelings about the socialization they experienced in their programs; and the impact of that socialization on graduates’ careers and their perceptions of their own professional preparedness. First, it is important to understand the socialization activities doctoral programs are undertaking, as well as how faculty view and approach these efforts. Even more critical to understand are student experiences and perceptions of these activities, as the impact of socialization efforts is arguably more important than the effort or intent. Finally, gaining an understanding of the ways in which socialization is affecting graduates’ professional outcomes is likely to lead to changes in programming and approach that will improve the experiences of future students, and increase relevancy of doctoral programs even as doctoral education is evolving.

Thus, the questions for this evaluation are:

1. In what ways are instructors implementing career-focused socialization activities - formal and/or informal - within doctoral programs?
2. Within these socialization efforts, in what ways are students given opportunities to explore non-faculty career preparation and advancement?

3. How are students being socialized for careers outside academia, and in what ways does this differ from how students are being socialized for careers in academia?

4. How prepared do students feel for their chosen careers upon graduation?

5. How are graduates’ careers affected by socialization, or lack thereof, during their graduate programs?

These questions address the heart of the evaluation goals and align well with the overall purpose of the evaluation. Answering these questions will provide the insight necessary to recommend any needed programmatic changes.
Statement of the Problem of Practice

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) has determined that the problem of practice (PoP) for a dissertation in practice (DiP) should be “situated in their workplace setting, one that they wanted to improve or resolve,” (Buss, 2018, p. 41) and that candidates should “frame problems in situ” (Storey & Maughan, 2015, p. 14). In developing a PoP, Storey and Maughan (2015) suggested a four-stage process in which candidates determine if a PoP is authentic, relevant, and deserves scholarly inquiry; if so, candidates should then “articulate the PoP in meaningful and direct language” (p. 15).

In determining authenticity, self-reflection including consideration of limitations and biases is encouraged. In the following Reflection on Positionality, I describe the experience that led to identifying this PoP, and my own biases in beginning the associated research. My observations of doctoral programs, followed by the time now spent on my own doctoral studies, have given me insight into the problem as it occurs in real time.

Establishing the need for a solution follows as we determine relevance. The current situation regarding doctoral socialization is, at best, unclear; at worst, many doctoral graduates are leaving their programs of study wholly unprepared for the realities of their chosen professions. The ideal situation for all doctoral programs, both Ph.D. and Ed.D., is one in which students are aware before entering programs of the socialization efforts led and goals held by associated faculty. To bridge the gap between these two, a reasonable and actionable solution is needed.

In terms of researchability, framing this problem through a lens of socialization and the CPED framework will provide an abundance of resources that can guide the development of a relevant evaluation. Additionally, there exists broader research on graduate career choice, and
the influences that affect such, as well as associated research about faculty perceptions of their own roles in this process. Bringing all relevant research together will provide a solid foundation on which to build an evaluation and recommend necessary changes to doctoral socialization.

Finally, in articulating the problem: This evaluation will examine the influence, if any, of socialization in doctoral programs as it concerns students who intend to pursue practitioner-based careers, and will provide insight into the gaps, if any exist, in doctoral student socialization. Further, it will allow program coordinators and faculty to develop and implement programmatic changes in order to better meet students’ changing needs.
Reflection on Positionality

In choosing a topic on which to focus my research, I drew on both my experience as a higher education professional working exclusively with graduate students and programs, and my own experiences as a student in a CPED-aligned Ed.D. program. My interest in this Problem of Practice and in designing this evaluation is admittedly two-fold: I want to be an active leader in affecting change in graduate education at all levels to improve the experiences and outcomes of students I work directly with, and I want to delve into my own experiences and the experiences of my cohort-mates within our Ed.D. program. I believe that seeking answers regarding doctoral socialization will allow me to improve my own practice, to assist with developing model contemporary programs, and further develop the skills I have been seeking as an Ed.D. student.

I have been working in graduate education for eight years, and it has become increasingly clear to me that this field, particularly doctoral education, is undergoing a shift in which student aspirations, needs, and outcomes are changing rapidly. Unfortunately, in most cases, the education system is not also evolving to meet those needs. As is typical of higher education, graduate programs tend to be deeply rooted in academic tradition and slow to change. Even in the face of a changing world and educational landscape, many doctoral program faculty and coordinators resist program modifications, and are insistent upon retaining the models and methods that have existed for decades. This is unfortunately true even when those models and methods may not serve students’ best interests.

As a higher education professional working directly with graduate students – sometimes even more extensively than program faculty – I have been in the position to support graduate students in attempts to seek out co-curricular experiences and activities or modify their programs to meet their needs and goals. There are cases in which this is possible and there are ways in
which I am able to help a student achieve their goals; unfortunately, there are many more situations in which there are simply no viable options available, and I am faced with a frustrated and disappointed student. In my practice, I have also encountered too many students who are dealing with program faculty who are apathetic, at best, about their students’ needs and goals. In the worst cases, faculty dismiss student goals when they do not exactly align with their own philosophy or ideal outcomes, or those which have been established within a program.

Oftentimes even more difficult is working with faculty in attempts to make programmatic changes that will benefit students. Because so many educational models and traditions are deeply embedded, faculty often do not consider or attempt more than minor changes to their programs, much less overhauls of how something so impactful as professional socialization is handled. Attempting to explain and justify the need for changes can be frustrating when faced with an audience that is firmly entrenched in its own dogma and processes – especially without the backup of relevant data. Perhaps selfishly, it is my hope the data that might be collected in undertaking this evaluation would be robust enough to change even the most stubborn minds about socialization processes and efforts within doctoral programs. It is also my hope that working with faculty to enact programmatic changes based on the resulting data would lead to the creation of graduate programs that could serve as a model for what modern graduate education might look like.

It is my firm belief that education at all levels must learn from our changing society and students and adapt as much as possible to best serve both. In our current society, I believe this means adapting doctoral education to fit into a practitioner-focused perspective to best serve a growing number of students seeking non-academic careers.
Conceptual Framework and Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework

“Conceptual frameworks are used in research for outlining possible options or for presenting the preferred approach, namely defining the problem and purpose, conducting a literature review, devising a methodology, data collection and final analysis” (Suman, 2014, p. 95). This conceptual framework has four elements, which are: the body of literature on graduate student socialization; the literature in relation to the influences on graduate students during their time in their doctoral programs; the literature concerning career choice among doctoral students; and how the framework outlined by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) influences practitioner-student success.

Graduate Student Socialization

Socialization among graduate students has been increasingly studied in recent years, along with the disparate effects differing types and levels of socialization have on students during their academic careers. Socialization is linked to student development and success, sense of belonging, and satisfaction with program of choice. It stands to reason that socialization is also a factor influencing student careers post-graduation, and that differing levels of socialization may lead to disparate levels of post-graduate student success in either practitioner or academic careers. John C. Weidman, Darla J. Twale, and Elizabeth L. Stein have developed a framework of graduate student socialization which has established:

that socialization into the professions is conceived as a series of processes whereby the novice: 1) enters the educational institution with values, beliefs, and attitudes about self and professional practices; 2) is exposed to various socializing influences while in school, including normative pressures exerted by faculty and peers, from society, professional
organizations, professional practice, and non-educational reference groups; 3) assesses the salience of the various normative pressures for attaining personal and professional goals, and 4) assumes, changes, or maintains those values, aspirations, identity and personal goals that were held at the onset of the socializing experience (Stein & Weidman, 1989, p. 14).

Their framework will be useful to this study as a way to interpret how the overall socialization process during students’ time in their graduate programs affects their professional outcomes.

Others have contributed significantly to the body of literature on graduate student socialization, as well. Much of the research outside the Weidman-Twale-Stein model focuses on faculty perspectives (e.g., Gardner, 2010b; Hermanowicz, 2016; Lechuga, 2011), underrepresented graduate student groups (e.g., Gardner, 2008), and disparities in academic environments (e.g., Liddell, et al., 2014; O’Meara, et al., 2014). Through her 2008 study of non-traditional doctoral students, Gardner found that high attrition rates in doctoral programs could be directly related to a failure in socialization, or a lack of students “fitting the mold” of their graduate programs. Gardner posited this failure is due to traditional socialization models having been almost exclusively focused on the historically homogenous doctoral student population - white males in their early 20s - and have not accounted for the diverse, non-normative experiences of those outside that population.

Of particular interest to this study are the implications of faculty perspectives of their roles in the socialization process, and how that can affect development of professional identity in students and their career outcomes. Because doctoral programs serve as the introduction to, and training for, students’ professional careers, both formal and informal socialization are critical to student development and success in graduate programs. Faculty are responsible for most of the
socialization during students’ time in their programs, both directly via active socialization and indirectly through the culture present in academic departments.

**Influences on Graduate Students**

Graduate students, specifically those in doctoral programs, are influenced heavily by their advisors, faculty, and peers. In some ways, doctoral students are often socialized to adapt their own thinking and pursuits to the interests and research endeavors of their program faculty.

Faculty mentors and advisors, specifically, have a large sphere of influence over students; it is perhaps inevitable, then, that faculty mentors are able to leverage that influence to best suit their own interests, or the interests of their departments. This study is specifically interested in the level of influence programs and faculty have over doctoral students, and how that influence is used as it pertains to post-doctoral careers.

Student agency is critical in ensuring that the homogeneity that has, in the past, existed in doctoral programs does not continue, and that students are not coerced into traditional academic paths based on the preferences and beliefs of program faculty. The relationship between faculty members, particularly advisors and mentors, and students is greatly unequal and vulnerable to coercion; the larger academic environment of a department also plays a role in either increasing or decreasing student agency. How student agency is affected will be a significant indicator of the influence and socialization - or lack thereof - students experience. O’Meara, et. al. presented a model of influence which is focused on graduate student agency and the ways in which graduate departments influence career advancement. Their findings outline five ways in which departments enable or influence graduate student agency in career advancement (O'Meara, et al., 2014) which will provide a useful framework for categorizing the different types and levels of influence students experience during their time in their graduate programs.
Graduate Student Career Choice

Post-graduate career choice among doctoral students is a relatively new topic. Until recently, doctoral programs prepared students to enter the faculty profession; the emergence of specialized doctoral programs that give students the opportunity to continue in their career fields has placed a burden of choice on students that did not previously exist. However, with the number of full-time, tenured faculty roles slowly declining, it is a choice with which more doctoral students than ever are faced. The literature on graduate student career choice specifically focuses on faculty involvement, student career services, and opportunities for hands-on learning while in the program. Of particular interest are the ways in which the Weidman-Twale-Stein model of socialization “does not address necessarily the career needs of graduate and professional students” and “could benefit from services designed to help them identify and explore their career interests” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006).

Given the current climate surrounding careers in academia, it is especially important that students receive the opportunity and guidance necessary to explore career options outside the faculty. Exposure to multiple career paths is critical to students during their time in doctoral programs, and greatly impacts both student agency and post-graduate career success. However, research (e.g., Hall & Burns, 2009; Lechuga, 2014; O’Meara, et al., 2014) suggests that, as with socialization, faculty knowledge and involvement is key to socializing students to alternate career paths, and many academic departments simply do not have faculty who are able or willing to advocate for alternate careers.

This study is interested in how all elements of career choice among doctoral students affect the ultimate decision of whether to enter the full-time faculty or to seek a career outside of
academe, on the assumption that some students do not enter doctoral programs with solid career aspirations.

**CPED Framework**

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate is the only established, national body that is addressing the change of direction being undertaken by many doctoral students, as well as the shift higher education, in general, is making in terms of faculty and tenure. The CPED Framework has been developed specifically to encourage schools of education to design doctoral programs focused on “quality, rigorous practitioner preparation” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021), rather than extending the traditional focus on preparation of future faculty. Though the CPED Framework consists of three separate components, one will be of most use to this study: Design Concepts on which to Build Programs. Of particular interest to this study are three elements therein: Scholarly Practitioner; Signature Pedagogy; and Mentoring and Advising (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021). Each of these concepts is aimed at producing doctoral graduates who are capable of practice at high levels, and whose careers will benefit from practitioner-focused programming. As the Framework is currently in practice in over 100 institutions, there should be abundant sample data.

The CPED Framework, while a bold step in a new direction of doctoral education, is not without its detractors. As outlined by Perry, Zambo, and Abruzzo (Perry et al., 2020), there are inherent challenges associated with designing or redesigning doctoral programs to follow the guidelines laid forth by CPED. Of particular concern are the resistance by faculty to the process itself, along with the challenges inherent to building programs around an evolving and emerging concept. There is also some data to suggest that, in many academic programs, there is too little distinction between traditional Ph.D. and the Ed.D. programs, leading some to believe that the
Ed.D. should be eliminated altogether. While these challenges do not invalidate the Framework itself, they certainly give room for thought and discussion.

**Review of Literature**

The drastic decrease in full-time, tenured faculty roles at US colleges and universities (Flaherty, 2018; Griffey, 2017) has led to a necessary shift in the career aspirations and realities of an increasing number of doctoral students (Duffin, 2021). It is also necessary to take into consideration the number of students who enter doctoral programs with no intention of seeking employment in academia, and who wish to continue or embark upon professional careers in their areas of study. In light of this shift, a critical question has arisen: Are traditional doctoral programs, which endeavor to prepare students to enter professorial roles, now failing to adequately train students for post-graduate success?

Socialization is a lens through which student development and success, along with acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions has traditionally been viewed (Weidman, 2015, p. 3), and was defined by Bragg (1976) as “that process by which individuals acquire the values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, and skills needed to perform their roles acceptably in the group or groups in which they are or seek to be members” (p. 6). As it concerns graduate students, socialization is also linked to professionalization in the field of study (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 47), and is typically dependent upon student-faculty and student-peer interactions, department and faculty environments, and scholarly involvement among individual students (Weidman & Stein, 2003, pp. 648-650). Bragg also identified three “important and distinct elements” (p. 6) inherent in the socialization process:

First, socialization is a continuous process whose end product is the acceptable functioning of the individual in his ascribed role… Second, socialization is a learning
process. Acceptable behavior, values and attitudes for the performance of a particular role are not inherent in an individual, but must be acquired… Third, the socialization process is a social process, that is, socialization cannot occur in a vacuum. (pp. 6-7)

A lack of proper socialization - or perhaps simply socialization mismatches - can have negative effects on students and programs. Graduate student attrition has been attributed to students feeling as though they do not “fit the mold” of the graduate programs in which they were enrolled (Gardner, 2008, p. 126). While peer mentoring and student support services would benefit many graduate students (Gardner, 2008, p. 135), the onus of socialization, particularly in doctoral programs, falls to the faculty. When interviewed, many faculty in graduate programs expressed understanding of their roles in facilitating student success and professional development, but failed to grasp the critical roles they play in the overall socialization process (Gardner, 2010b, pp. 41, 48-49).

While it is important to emphasize the agency students have in their own educational choices, it is undeniable that students are exposed to influence by their programs, faculty mentors and advisors, and the culture of their academic departments. In fact, the level of agency students have in their educational and ultimate career choices can be severely limited by the policies and practices of their chosen department, as well as individual student interactions with faculty mentors and advisors (O'Meara et al., 2014, p. 158). A concerted effort by individual academic departments to encourage and legitimize multiple possible career paths - including those outside of academia - was shown to increase student agency and improve program satisfaction (O'Meara et al., 2014, p. 165). Within the overarching department culture, students are also heavily influenced by their academic advisors and/or mentors, relationships that obviously have more impact at the individual level. Mentoring and advising relationships are typically more successful
when students take on the beliefs, identities, and behaviors most valued by the faculty (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 50). Not only can this lead to homogenization of student populations and, in worst cases, coercion (Hall & Burns, 2009, pp. 50, 60), it can also lead to reduced student agency in career choice.

In the current higher education climate in the US, the traditional doctoral career choice - entering full-time, tenure-track faculty roles - is simply not an option for the majority of doctoral graduates. In 2016, 73% of faculty roles were non-tenured (American Association of University Professors, 2018), while 45-54% of college courses were being taught by non-tenure track faculty in 2017 (Government Accountability Office, 2017). There is a need, then, for doctoral students to be socialized and prepared for non-faculty roles. The reality, however, is that students feel ill-informed of alternate career paths (Laursen et al., 2012, p. 1), faculty feel prepared to advise students based only on their own experiences (Laursen et al., 2012, p. 5), and graduate programs often do not give students the opportunities to explore the choices available to them (Laursen et al., 2012, p.5). Acknowledging that graduate students are unprepared for the current workforce (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 73), the implementation of career services for graduate students only makes sense. Offering career counseling, programming, and placement services (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, pp. 79-80) would increase student agency in post-graduate career choice.

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) is currently the only national organization focused on the widespread change in direction for many doctoral students, including shifting career aspirations. The emphasis on “quality, rigorous practitioner preparation” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021a) is a departure from traditional non-applied, academia-focused doctoral programs. In preparing scholarly practitioners, the
CPED Framework encourages a “progression toward a profession” (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 138) that is simply lacking in more traditional approaches. The CPED method is not without its detractors, though, most notably in the form of fairly widespread resistance from faculty who do not want change and who do not understand the DiP process (Perry et al., 2020, p. 3).

The changing landscape of higher education is forcing doctoral students to change their career ambitions; doctoral programs should be changing alongside them. This literature review focuses on four specific areas that affect doctoral student career choice. The first considers how socialization affects students and their mindsets toward career choice. The second examines the influences students feel in their decision-making processes. The third explores the elements of career choice, itself. And the fourth identifies the ways in which the CPED Framework is addressing the overall change in direction concerning career choice.

**Graduate Student Socialization**

The Stein and Weidman, later the Weidman-Twale-Stein, model of graduate student socialization provides the most thorough lens through which socialization, as it occurs in graduate programs, can be identified and assessed. The Stein and Weidman framework “is an effort to account for the individual's ability to fill social roles and for society to prepare individuals for professional positions” and “looks at socialization outcomes at both the institutional and individual levels” (Stein & Weidman, 1989, pp. 10-11). As it concerns integration into various professions, this framework suggested that students adapt to the standards and norms that are valued and practiced within professional settings. Stein and Weidman also acknowledged that the socialization process is unique to each individual who experiences it and is dependent upon the personal needs and interpretations of each student (Stein & Weidman, 1989, p. 13). The entirety of the framework is summarized as follows:
socialization into the professions is conceived as a series of processes whereby the novice: 1) enter the educational institution with values, beliefs, and attitudes about self and professional practices; 2) is exposed to various socializing influences while in school, including normative pressures exerted by faculty and peers, from society, professional organizations, professional practice, and non-educational reference groups; 3) assesses the salience of the various normative pressures for attaining personal and professional goals, and 4) assumes, changes, or maintains those values, aspirations, identity and personal goals that were held at the onset of the socializing experience (Stein & Weidman, 1989, p. 14).

Stein and Weidman proposed this framework can be used to examine socialization at both the individual and institutional levels, and that by doing so, considers socialization via different perspectives. They also suggested that their framework does not require or rely upon homogeneity within a graduate student population, where previous models did (Stein & Weidman, 1989, p. 15). In terms of examining socialization and career choice among graduate students, the Stein and Weidman framework offers distinct advantages: first, that both the individual and the program or institution are accounted for; second, that professional socialization is prioritized; and third, that more diverse student populations can be included.

The Weidman-Twale-Stein model of graduate student socialization expanded upon the framework first outlined by Weidman and Stein. Weidman et al. focused on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with socialization in graduate programs, as well as the processes by which all are acquired (Weidman et al., 2001, pp. 3-4). With respect to the multidimensional nature of socialization, there are three important distinctions: collective v. individual socialization, which acknowledges both the similar and divergent experiences among
individuals in graduate programs; formal v. informal socialization, which contrasts specifically
designed initiatives with more organic interactions; and random v. sequential socialization,
which differentiates between defined and undefined steps and patterns of socialization-related
activities (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 7). These distinctions are critical when considering
socialization among more diverse student populations, as well as determining the intentionality
with which program faculty approach the socialization process.

Weidman et al. also identified four stages of graduate student socialization: anticipatory,
formal, informal, and personal (Weidman et al., 2001, pp. 12-13). For the purposes of this study,
the formal and informal stages will provide the best insight into the process of socialization
during students’ time in their programs. In the formal stage of role acquisition, “the novice
receives formal instruction in the knowledge upon which future professional authority will be
based” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 13), while in the informal stage, “students receive behavioral
clues, observe acceptable behavior, and, it is hoped, respond and react accordingly” (Weidman et
al., 2001, p. 14). It is important to note that formal socialization occurs through students’
interactions with faculty, primarily during classroom instruction, whereas informal socialization
is dependent on students’ interactions with their peers. Within these stages, Weidman et al. also
identified three core elements of socialization: knowledge acquisition, investment, and
involvement (Weidman et al., 2001, pp. 16-18). In terms of developing a professional identity
and acquiring the skills and dispositions necessary for professional career development, all three
are critical components, and are all experienced in each of the aforementioned stages.

In his 2015 presentation at the International Conference on Education Research (ICER),
Weidman offered a more concise view of the socialization process and outcomes which take into
consideration “the possibility of [graduate students] having strong influences from both within
and external to the higher education institution” (Weidman, 2015, slide 4). The processes of socialization, or “Accumulating Social Capital” (Weidman, 2015, slide 6) are outlined as:

- INTER-personal interaction (Peer, faculty interaction)
- INTRA-personal interaction (Studying, attending lectures)
- Integration (Incorporation into campus academic and social life) (Weidman, 2015, slide 6)

The outcomes, or “Habitus” (Weidman, 2015, slide 6) of this socialization process are:

- Acquisition of knowledge
- Acquisition of skills
- Acquisition of dispositions (Weidman, 2015, slide 6)

For doctoral programs, specifically those in which students continue their professional careers while enrolled, the expectation that external influences will play a role is unique and important. The socialization process for these students is therefore different by default and must be accounted for.

Weidman et al. provided a diagram (Figure 1) for the interactive stages of socialization in their model that provides a visual representation of the overlap that exists between stages and influences, along with the outcomes of the socialization process. The center of the diagram reflects the “core socialization experience in the graduate degree program” and focuses attention on “the segment of the socialization process over which the academic program in the university has primary control” (Weidman et al., 2001, pp. 37-38), while the outer portions represent the elements of socialization that interact with the central elements. The outer elements are non-linear, may have disparate impact on students, and are not controlled by the university or program. The stages of socialization do not follow a lock-step model, and students will progress
through these stages on varying timelines; the key to this model are the interlocking interactions represented, rather than the timing of students’ progression through them.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptualizing Graduate Student Socialization*

![Diagram showing Conceptualizing Graduate Student Socialization](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED457710.pdf)


A revision to the interactions represented in this diagram was made in 2016 by Twale, Weidman and Bethea (Figure 2), in which they tweaked the elements to include “Academic Fields” and “Faculty Climate” in the Institutional Culture category (Twale et al., 2016, p. 87), providing a useful tool for evaluating a growing graduate education landscape. This addition accounts for the differences in socialization experiences among fields that may prioritize
academics and professional socialization differently, as well as the proven impact faculty have on students. Twale et al. removed “Peer Climate” from their updated diagram, though its impact justifies its continued inclusion here. For the purposes of this study, focusing on the core of this model - both original and updated - will provide elements that focus on student socialization, both formal and informal, within the purview of their academic programs.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptualizing Graduate Student Socialization: Re-Visiting the Weidman-Twale-Stein Model (adapted from Weidman, 2006; Weidman, et al., 2001)*

*Note. From “Conceptualizing Socialization of Graduate Students of Color: Revisiting the Weidman-Twale-Stein Framework,” by D. Twale, J. Weidman, K. Bethea, 2016, *The Western*
A recent adaptation of the Weidman-Twale-Stein model provides additional elements that will be beneficial in identifying socialization that is specific to students’ professionalization to a chosen career field while still in an academic program. In the Weidman-Twale-Stein model, the outlying elements, while integral to the holistic socialization process, remain external to the academic program itself. Sonnenschein et al. addressed this in their revised framework (Figure 3), which also provides some markers of appropriate socialization for professional careers. The core of this revised framework was titled “Higher education socialization processes and career development,” and emphasized the need for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Interactions with specific populations as integral components of professional socialization (Sonnenschein et al., 2018). These are significant deviations from the original framework, and provide a more modern, practitioner-based approach to socialization. Sonnenschein et al. have placed WIL as a core component of professional socialization, whereas Weidman et al. relegated Employers to an outer ring of their framework and considered the majority of professional socialization to be “not under control of the academic program area” (Weidman et al., as cited in Sonnenschein et al., 2018, p. 1293), though possibly impactful of the overall graduate experience. Sonnenschein et al. found in their study that most of their respondents “recommended the introduction of an internship program embedded in the degree, which would allow the students to develop relevant attributes for their future career and give them a competitive advantage in recruitment” and “enable students to have realistic expectations of their future professional positions” (p. 1293). There is also a specific focus on Interactions within the core of the revised framework;
Sonnenschein et al. included among these recommended interactions academics, students, graduates, and managers, though it is easy to see how this group could be expanded or retracted as needed to fit the specific needs of an academic program. Their study affirmed that it can be “advantageous for students’ socialization into a career in the industry that more networking with academics, peers and graduates is developed” and that relationship-building within a professional community could lead to the development of realistic professional expectations and outlooks (p. 1293).

The Sonnenschein et al. framework also included ellipses with external elements, including Industry Sector and Graduates, which would be largely outside the control or oversight of an academic program (Sonnenschein et al., 2018). However, the bulk of recommended professional socialization existed in the framework’s core, and within the graduate program itself. The elements contained within this framework provide excellent markers which can be identified as present or missing in graduate programs; they are specific enough to provide benchmarks, but universal enough to fit the needs of various graduate programs.
More support for professional socialization within in academic programs comes from the work of Adler and Adler, who asserted that “our work settings are where much of our adult socialization takes place,” and for students “entering the professions, occupational socialization occurs in specialized graduate programs” (Adler & Adler, 2005, p. 11). Though their work...
focused on sociology students’ professional socialization to academic careers, the “key turning points in [students’] identity transformations” (p. 11) they described can provide a structure by which students’ professional socialization to practitioner careers can be examined. They defined the “Professionalization Process” as how students “navigate their way through the requirements of various graduate programs, learn the inside facts about the field, and emerge as credentialed professionals with a unique combination of training and interests” (p. 12), a process their research has shown follows a specific pattern leading to “a severe split in the professionalization process” (p. 16) in which students are sorted from their larger cohort into groups based on their professional aspirations. Adler and Adler emphasized the confusion inherent in students during this period of their academic careers, in which they were pressed to make career choices before being given the opportunity to explore and gather information about their options, as well as students’ search for “marketable areas of interest” (p. 19) on which to focus their dissertations. The lack of a formal professional socialization structure impacted students not only in their progress towards degrees, but in their transition from academic to professional identities and the job-seeking process that followed. Much of the professional socialization students reported took place under their own initiative, outside formal programmatic requirement or guidance.

The interactions described in these frameworks fit what Kim (2018) termed an “ecological view” (p. 965) of socialization, in which “learning is an outcome of a combination of participation, modeling, and performance through meaningful interaction with members of a community” (p. 965), rather than a result of simple knowledge transfer from expert to student. A socialization process involving multiple members of associated communities allows students to “mediate knowledge, beliefs, literacy practices, and ideologies embedded in the community” (p. 965). Kim also acknowledged that “interactions in multiple spaces in different forms are woven
into doctoral students’ socialization processes to construct their professional identities” (Seloni, 2012, as cited in Kim, 2018). In terms of benefits, therefore, WIL and professional socialization can be viewed as integral components of the graduate pedagogy, and not simply recommendations to students as undertakings to be handled in their own non-academic time.

Bragg’s (1976) original elements of socialization also offered evidence for the benefit of implementing experiential learning within academic programs as professional socialization agents. About her second element of socialization, Bragg concluded that the learning process as it relates to socialization must include practice and experiences in which students interact with and elicit responses from their environment. As such, learning is directly related to one’s own experiences in that area. Bragg also expounded on five steps inherent to the socialization process, concluding with the internalization of norms associated with the group with which one desires membership. In terms of professional socialization, “the success of the socialization process in professional education rests on the internalization of professional norms and values by the neophyte” (p. 8).

Regarding Weidman et al.’s original model, and applicable even to the updated Twale-Weidman-Bethea and Sonnenschein et al. adaptations, Gopaul described the core formal and informal stages of socialization:

The formal stage involves interactions and communications with faculty members and advanced students. New students are particularly interested in task competencies as well as learning about role expectations and how such roles are performed or conducted. The informal stage is an important entry point in the students’ transition from a sense of “student-ness” to one of “emerging professional”. Here,
students are exposed to particular behavioral cues and learn appropriate reactions and responses through verbal and non-verbal communications (Gopaul, 2016, p. 48).

The transition from student to professional described here relies heavily on the socialization process students experience during their degree programs, and Gopaul’s study also found vast differences in the socialization experiences available to doctoral students. During his interviews with doctoral students, Gopaul found that “doctoral education could be thought of as constitutive of activities and practices that possess value” (p. 53) that creates disparate levels of cultural capital among students, and that “the extent to which students experience socialization is partly related to their portfolio of accomplishments (i.e., capitals) within doctoral study” (p. 58). In short, Gopaul concluded that socialization experiences are not the same for all students.

Considering the disparity of socialization experiences among graduate students, including but not limited to the impacts of their ongoing professional careers, is a critical component of examining socialization and success during and after graduate programs. It is also necessary to consider the impacts of failed socialization on higher education; according to data from 2006, attrition rates in doctoral programs nationwide ranged from 40-70% (Gardner, 2008, p. 126), an alarming statistic. Even more alarming is the financial burden of high attrition rates. According to a study conducted by the University of Notre Dame, the university “would save $1 million dollars per year in stipends alone if doctoral student attrition went down by 10%” (Smallwood, 2004, as cited in Gardner, 2008, p. 126). Gardner posited that attrition rates can be at least partially attributed to failed socialization, or, as she terms it, a failure of “fitting the mold” (Gardner, 2008, p. 126) of graduate programs. Gardner specifically focused on socialization as it concerns underrepresented graduate populations, particularly women and students of color who have historically been excluded from graduate programs that have traditionally been comprised
of white males. Because graduate student socialization models were developed based on this homogenous population, the non-normative experiences of others has, largely, not been explored.

In her study of chemistry and history departments at two state universities, Gardner found that “women students at both institutions and within both disciplines discussed issues related to their gender and how this at times affected their experiences” (Gardner, 2008, p. 131), and that sexism was rooted in the male-dominated departments, in regard to both students and faculty hiring processes (Gardner, 2008, p. 131). Students of color also reported disparate experiences in homogenous graduate programs. The percentage of students of color in doctoral programs rose only 14% from 1976 to 2004 (Gardner, 2008, p. 132); in fact, for this specific study, only four students of color were available as participants. In terms of fitting the current mold, students of color likely have the largest hurdles to overcome.

Gardner also included older students, over the age of 30, and found that the normative graduate student mold also did not apply to them. Specifically, students reported a lack of peer interaction that prevented a main aspect of proper socialization, along with general discouragement from many faculty members, another critical component of socialization. Also of concern to Gardner’s study were students with children, who may also be represented as older students, and which Gardner found affected female students with children more than male students with children. Because many traditional graduate programs are not designed to accommodate families, and do not allow students the flexibility to both care for children and fulfill their academic responsibilities, many parent-students reported a disconnect between their experiences and the experiences of younger, child-free students. (Gardner, 2008, pp. 133-134).
Last, Gardner included part-time students in her study, and points out the disparate experiences they have, primarily due to the lack of interaction they have with their full-time peers (Gardner, 2008, p. 134). Again, a main element of graduate student socialization, peer interaction, is unfulfilled for many students simply due to the lack of inclusive structures designed to support informal peer socialization.

In general terms, graduate student socialization should lead to “professional competence and confidence” (Golde, 2010, p. 83), which is what programs should strive toward for all students, including those who fit a more diverse category. Golde emphasized that the process of professional development in graduate programs is not relegated to, or even predominant in, the classroom. Instead, learning and professional socialization is most prevalent in the peripheral activities of graduate, particularly doctoral, students, and knowledge is transmitted via an “immersion in the actual work of knowledge production” (Golde, 2010, p. 84). She went on to echo Weidman, acknowledging the formal and informal socialization structures built into graduate programs, but pointed out that these structures are often specific to individual fields of study, and vary widely among disciplines. Socialization of graduate students is, therefore, predominantly based upon individual programs and faculty, along with the norms and requirements of professional disciplines (Golde, 2010, p. 92). Regarding underrepresented students, Golde (p. 93) put forth the theory that, because socialization can be largely department-specific, students can have as much of an impact on the socialization process as faculty and institutions, though she also acknowledged that academia, being mainly conservative when it comes to change, may reject student-led initiatives.

It seems, then, that the onus of creating most socialization structures falls to programs and faculty. As Gardner (2010b) pointed out, faculty interactions with students and the numerous
roles faculty play during students’ time in graduate programs has been discussed extensively, but without input from faculty about their specific beliefs of what their roles actually entail. Gardner’s study sought out faculty perspectives of “the socialization process and their role in it” (p. 39) to quantify the ways more clearly in which faculty contribute to and dictate the processes of socialization and professionalization. Gardner categorized her findings following three socialization elements outlined by Bragg: “(a) the interaction of students with the structure of the academic setting, (b) the interaction among students in the program, and (c) the interaction between students and faculty members” (Bragg, 1976, as cited in Gardner, 2010b, p. 43). Gardner found that the admission and isolation practices within programs closely followed Bragg’s first element regarding the structure of the academic setting, as did the ways in which they reported role-modeling values and norms. However, few faculty responded with understanding of the importance of peer interactions within graduate programs, Bragg’s second element. Finally, regarding Bragg’s third element, faculty-student interactions, the majority of faculty in Gardner’s study emphasized both formal and informal elements of their own interactions with students (Gardner, 2010b, pp. 45-46). When asked explicitly about the ways in which they contribute to student socialization, some respondents emphasized their efforts at professional development among their students; however, “it is apparent that the majority of faculty interviewed at this institution do not see the important roles they play in their doctoral students’ socialization” (Gardner, 2010b, p. 48).

This is a concerning oversight on the part of faculty, particularly as “failure to become well socialized and develop a professional identity may limit access to or effectiveness in professional roles” (Ibarra, 1999, as cited in Liddell et al., 2014, p. 69). In their study, Ibarra et al. sought to understand the role socialization in graduate programs played in the professional
identity development of graduates. Their study concluded that, as outlined by Weidman et al. and Gardner, socialization was dependent upon both in-class and out-of-class experiences, both of which play critical roles in professionalization. In-class experiences, or formal faculty-student interactions, served to model ethical practice, promote involvement in professional associations, and encourage self-reflection in ways not possible outside of curricular experiences (Liddell et al., 2014, p. 82). On the other hand, out-of-class experiences, primarily informal peer and professional interactions, were valued by students for their transmission of professional norms and expectations, as well as providing networking opportunities for future career opportunities (Liddell et al., 2014, p. 81). The study emphasized the need for faculty to be purposeful in their approach to student socialization, particularly in terms of finding areas in which they can merge the formal, in-class experiences with the informal but valuable out-of-class experiences.

**Influences on Graduate Students**

Socialization in graduate programs primarily focuses on students’ interactions with faculty members and student peers, and though these do play main roles, they are not the only influences graduate students face when making decisions about their career paths. Students encounter various “socializing agents” (Bragg, 1976, p. 8) during their academic careers which act “as both model and goal clarifier” (Bragg, 1976, p. 8) in relation to students’ professional goals. The impact these socializing agents have on students depends primarily on “frequency of contact, their primacy, and their control over rewards and punishment” (Brim and Wheeler, 1966, p. 8, as cited in Bragg, 1976), as well as the amount and immediacy of feedback to the student (Bragg, 1976). In reflecting upon socializing agents, Bragg made clear that, while faculty members, as role models, are critical to socialization, so too are “the structural features of the educational setting and the student’s peers as both socializing agents and as fellow neophytes”
Throughout a student’s academic career, many socializing agents contribute to the eventual internalization of professional norms, marking successful professional socialization.

For example, Gardner and Barnes (2007) found that a key influence on the eventual career success of graduate students was their level of involvement in their programs; specifically, their level of involvement in activities that transmit professional norms and standards. An interesting element of Gardner and Barnes’ 2007 study was that graduate students expressed their understanding that involvement in their graduate programs was fundamentally different from their involvement during their undergraduate programs; several students interviewed expressed their intentionality in seeking professional socialization through their involvement during their graduate programs. The difference, from their viewpoint, was the emphasis on professional development that is present in many graduate programs, but less emphasized to undergraduates (Gardner & Barnes, 2007, p. 375). In terms of socialization, Gardner and Barnes pointed out that, in most cases, professional development within graduate programs is a form of socialization that prepares students “for the professional role and its associated values and culture” (Gardner & Barnes, 2007, p. 375). In fact, the participants in this study reported that their involvement during their graduate programs was direct professional socialization, “providing them with skills, connections, and better understandings of what is expected of them in these chosen careers” (Gardner & Barnes, 2007, p. 381). Unfortunately, while some programs understand the link between involvement and professionalization and are purposeful in their requirements of students regarding involvement, this study revealed that most student involvement remains peer- and faculty-prompted at the individual level.

A lack of firm regulations surrounding student involvement during graduate programs is likely a product of outdated norms, which contribute more to career choice than many perhaps
realize. O’Meara et al. (2014) determined that “department policies, practices, and field norms will influence the range and degree of agency that doctoral students assume in pursuit of their goals and this agency can fluctuate based on a variety of factors” (p. 158). Emphasizing students’ agency in their educational and career decisions is critical, as is acknowledging that such agency does not develop in a vacuum. In their 2014 study of doctoral students in various programs, O’Meara et al. ascertained that programs and departments, by various methods, affect agency in career choice in five ways: “(1) encouraging and legitimizing multiple career paths, (2) providing structured opportunities for students to practice skills and experience different work environments, (3) providing resources (financial support and information), (4) facilitating networking, and (5) offering mentoring and guidance” (O’Meara et al., 2014, p. 164). Legitimizing multiple career options, rather than training students for just one general path, gave students a sense of unique program support, and increased students’ belief in attaining their career goals (pp. 165-166). The study also emphasized the continuing importance of faculty-student relationships, along with peer relationships and involvement, reflecting the impact of socialization on student career development.

Peer connections are an integral part of socialization, both to graduate school and to a profession. In her study, Gardner (2010a) revealed that in programs with high completion rates, “the central source of support was other students in their program… support from other students was mentioned far more frequently than support from advisors or faculty members” (p. 70). Students also reported depending on older peers first, then transitioning to faculty mentors during the latter part of their academic careers. By Brim and Wheeler’s definition, peers’ frequency of contact during academic programs makes them “significant others” (Brim and Wheeler, 1966, as cited in Bragg, 1976, p. 8) in terms of socializing agents. Within academic programs, peer
interactions can be placed into two broad, equally important categories: “(1) “old” students interact with “new” students as role models and information sources, and (2) students interact with each other as fellow neophytes” (Bragg, 1976, p. 26). Such interactions and information-sharing among peers are often critical to student success in graduate programs, resulting in students forming “subcultures” in which they problem-solve issues common to their program or group, share positive and negative feedback, and develop their own group standards and sanctions (Bragg, 1976). Additionally, when students are unable to get specific answers from faculty about assignments or expectations, students are likely to approach their peer groups for guidance, which eventually leads to peers establishing academic norms for themselves and others. Essentially, these subcultures become established as socializing agents external but adjacent to academic programs, providing students with valuable academic and professional socialization. Bragg’s hypothesis concerning these student peer groups, which she found to be substantiated through studies, was that student subcultures would be stronger and more active socializing agents in programs and departments where other role models were less readily available. It is then more likely to find robust student subcultures “in programs where student-faculty interaction outside of class is low and where the student-faculty ratio is high so that faculty members address groups of students rather than individuals” (Bragg, 1976, p. 27). In effect, peer groups take over socialization responsibilities when there is a lack of appropriate effort on the part of departmental faculty, or when there is a lack of formal socialization built into the academic curriculum.

These student subcultures in many cases foster a sense of collegiality and provide neophyte students with peer role models who can stand in for faculty members who may or may not provide appropriate socialization efforts within students’ academic programs. However, in
contrast to supportive peer groups bonded by solidarity and common goals, competition among
students abounds in some graduate programs, preventing the creation of cohesive student
subcultures. Within academic programs where competition among students is fierce, Bragg
(1976) detected that students may be “afraid to share information with each other” (p. 29) in
attempts to protect their own ideas or get ahead of their peers. Adler and Adler (2005) uncovered
the same issues during their own study and discussed it as part of “The Cohort Phenomenon” (p.
14) in their “Professionalization Process” (p. 12) framework. Because of the general
homogeneity of students entering sociology doctoral programs, many of the students were
similar in gender, race, and background; in some cases, this led to “a cohort that related well to
each other, supported each other, and provided extracurricular activities for the group” (p. 14).

However, in other cases, competition prevented cohesion and “anecdotes of cheating,
backstabbing, gossiping, and cliquish behavior were not uncommon” (p. 14) among students.
Adler and Adler also discovered that some students - especially those who were already focused
on an interest area or research topic - opted out of student subcultures, lacking interest or a sense
of belonging with their peers. In terms of professional socialization, this self-selection may not
necessarily be negative; lacking a strong comprehensive peer group, students are able to “define
themselves, find their calling, and seek out intellectual buddies” (p. 16) with similar interests and
aspirations. Students who identified commonalities with peers were often able to help each other
“navigate through the often troubled waters of substantive specialties and departmental politics”
(p. 16), providing the same type of support offered by larger peer groups, on a smaller scale.
However, students without strong research ideas or professional aspirations often floundered and
felt unprepared for splitting from their cohort. Adler and Adler learned that those students often
had difficulty relating to peers, finding mentors, and deciding on specialties and research topics;
as a result, those students “questioned their presence in graduate school and their commitment to the field” (p. 16). Further, Bragg’s research recognized that “Students’ perceptions of competitiveness correlates negatively with their nonacademic satisfaction” (p. 29), and that high levels of competition can cause students to drop out of their academic programs. Student subcultures, then, play critical roles in not only student success, but retention and satisfaction, as well. Especially in academic environments lacking strong faculty mentorship or integrated socialization efforts, these peer groups can play substantial roles in bridging socialization gaps and providing a structure by which students can seek success.

While peer interactions are critical for both academic and professional socialization in many disciplines, other studies have shown that graduate students “consider their relations with faculty members to be one of the most important factors in determining the quality of their educational experience” (Schroeder and Mynatt, 1993, as cited in Lechuga, 2011, p. 759). In terms of professional development, faculty are the main vehicles through which students receive education and guidance on the norms, culture, and requirements of their specific fields. In Lechuga’s (2011) study, faculty members interviewed emphasized the importance of encouraging, and in some cases requiring, students’ involvement in professional socialization experiences during their graduate programs, showing their understanding of the benefits of such efforts (pp. 766-767). However, Lechuga learned that the majority of faculty focused on formal interactions with students, even outside of the classroom, when discussing socialization and professional development; there was little, if any, emphasis on unstructured or informal interactions. Lechuga’s study also focused on faculty’s role in the socialization of students to academe, or, as he terms, acting as “ambassadors of the profession” (Lechuga, 2011, p. 768). In this study, socialization to non-academic careers was not discussed.
The lack of intentional socialization to multiple career paths is perhaps explained by two related ideas. First, that faculty members rarely, if ever, receive training that directly prepares them for advising and mentoring relationships with students. Therefore, they tend to rely on the advising and mentoring they received as students, as well as their own professional experiences, perhaps unwittingly maintaining the status quo (Hall & Burns, 2009, pp. 49-50). Second, that “mentoring relationships are typically perceived as more successful when doctoral students… take on the identities that are valued by their mentors and/or institutions” (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 50), and that students actively model the ideas and behaviors they believe will benefit them most in specific situations. As a result, graduate students are more likely to “be influenced by the models of identity that are most valued and recognized” (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 53), and will actively seek advisor/mentor approval by making decisions that mirror the values of their programs and faculty. Hall and Burns also pointed out the distinct power dynamics that are typically associated with faculty-student relationships and theorized that students may feel that they have little choice but to comply with faculty wishes in their academic and professional pursuits. Such limited power on students’ part can, in worst cases, lead to coercive relationships in which students’ agency over their own professional interests could be negatively affected (Hall & Burns, 2009, pp. 58-60).

From their 2005 study, Adler and Adler reported doctoral students’ troubles in finding advisors and dissertation committee members to advise, guide, and support their areas of interest and research. Students were faced with “professors [who] were “one-trick ponies” who forced them into their areas of specialization” (p. 17), or committee members who refused to allow students to change the direction of their research away from the members’ own areas of interest. Students also expressed their realizations of, and disillusionment about, the political nature of
their academic department, and how divisions among faculty impacted their own success and satisfaction with their academic progress. Students found themselves “shut off from some areas because professors did not get along… and that people they had come to work with were either unavailable or disinterested in them” (p. 16), forcing students to seek others less knowledgeable about certain topics or change their own research areas entirely. Adler and Adler also found that, even among large departments, the number of faculty available to advise or serve on student committees was greatly reduced based on the faculty’s areas of research and interest, as well as interpersonal issues between faculty inhibiting cooperation. While some students reported this to be a small issue only, others were discouraged by how they “floundered unable to find people with whom to connect” (p. 17).

Such coercion and continued homogenization, as well as compromised career agency on students’ part, can be particularly destructive when considering the difficulty most doctoral graduates have in entering full-time, tenured roles in higher education (Hermanowicz, 2016, p. 294). This is particularly concerning when taking into account the reality that, in terms of professionalization and socialization, “norms are transmitted and internalized such that they ideally become self-imposed rather than exclusively managed by external regulation (Braxton and Baird 2001; Hermanowicz 2012, as cited in Hermanowicz, 2016, p. 292). In essence, students who strive to emulate their program and faculty values, regardless of their own aspirations, may continue to restrict themselves to following the norms imposed on them in those programs, even after graduating and beginning their own careers.

Bragg (1976) was not so concerned with coercion between faculty and students, but instead regarded socialization as “a mutual interaction, not an indoctrination process” (p. 9). Instead of socialization forcing “conformity” in students, Bragg identified a “sharing of value
patterns between the person being socialized and the socializing agent” (p. 9) in which both parties learn from each other in a reciprocal relationship and change because of each other’s influence. It remains true in these reciprocal relationships that students will attempt to imitate the behaviors modeled for them by socializing agents; however, Bragg argued that what the students end up imitating are what they “perceive… to be the role model’s behavior, values, and attitudes,” and that there is “much latitude in the bounds of acceptable behavior” (p. 9).

Even with Bragg’s reassurance that coercion is less likely than many might believe, there remains a problematic lack of clarity and consistent understanding on the part of the student in terms of professional socialization and expectations. While coercion is certainly not the goal, there must be some accommodations made for the norms and behaviors expected within students’ anticipated career fields. If they are able only to imitate what they perceive to be correct, rather than internalize the actual or ideal behaviors and norms of their fields, programs are still falling short of successful professional socialization. This is especially concerning considering that, in most cases, those new to a profession must not only be socialized to the basic norms of that career field but must also possess “a sense of priorities for applying the norms in conflicting or changing situations” (Bragg, 1976, p. 10). This higher-level professional socialization cannot exist where basic socialization is not prioritized as part of the larger academic curricula. There is a real need, then, “to broaden career information in graduate training, including information about Ph.D. production and employment prospects” and “to devote more time, money, and effort to career planning for graduate students” (Hermanowicz, 2016, p. 294).
**Graduate Student Career Choice**

Though there has been some leveling since 2018, the number of doctoral degrees earned in the United States has steadily increased since the early 2000s (Duffin, 2021). This increase has occurred while the number of full-time, tenured faculty positions has steadily declined. As of 2016, 73% of instructional positions were off the tenure track (American Association of University Professors, 2018), with non-tenured faculty responsible for teaching up to 54% of courses at colleges and universities (Government Accountability Office, 2017). Such statistics reveal the great difficulty faced by doctoral graduates who have been socialized only for careers in academia, and whose professionalization did not include the legitimation of alternate career paths. Also troubling is the impact of non-tenured faculty on higher education; according to Moore (2019), “adjunct professors within a large community college system were associated with higher grades but lower long-term student outcomes,” suggesting that instructors off the tenure track do not contribute equally to student development. There are solid reasons, then, for doctoral programs to professionalize and socialize students to careers outside academe.

Support for professional socialization within in academic programs comes from the work of Adler and Adler, who asserted that “our work settings are where much of our adult socialization takes place,” and for students “entering the professions, occupational socialization occurs in specialized graduate programs” (Adler & Adler, 2005, p. 11). Though their work focused specifically on sociology students, the “key turning points in [students’] identity transformations” (p. 11) they described can provide a structure by which professional socialization in other disciplines can be examined. They defined the “Professionalization Process” as how students “navigate their way through the requirements of various graduate programs, learn the inside facts about the field, and emerge as credentialed professionals with a
unique combination of training and interests” (p. 12), a process observed to follow a specific pattern. Disappointingly, the majority of positive, relevant professionalization experiences students reported having taken part in were external to the formal curriculum of their program. Students “attended conferences, joined specialty societies, and deliberately networked to meet people who shared their interests” (p. 18), presented their own work at conferences and competitions, submitted papers for publication, and sought mentorship external to their own institutions. These student-led efforts were, at least partially, the result of the lack of support and interest students felt from their own institutions and departments during the latter stages of their time in their academic program, leading to a significant gap in their socialization. In this case, students participating in Adler and Adler’s study were not being socialized to either academic or practitioner careers, even though their cohort had been separated by career choice near the beginning of their program. However, the professionalization efforts that did exist within the department were most beneficial to students seeking careers in academia: faculty and mentors suggested conference attendance, submitting papers for publication, and teaching as career preparation activities for students. While these activities certainly would not detract from students’ overall post-graduate career choices, they also do not provide appropriate socialization for careers outside academia.

There have been suggestions that doctoral programs find ways to socialize students for alternate career paths in order to meet the changing needs of the current workforce (COSEPUP 1995, 2007; Greene, Hardy & Smith, 1996; Golde & Walker, 2006; AAS, 1997; CPSMA, 2000, as cited in Laursen et al., 2012, p. 1), as well as the educational needs for students whose career aspirations lie outside academia. Exposure to multiple career paths is a crucial element of socialization for doctoral students; however, many doctoral students report a lack of career
information and development for any non-traditional path (Laursen et al., 2012). Laursen et al. (2012) found that the burden of academic advising - and socialization, by default - fell to faculty who reported an openness to multiple career paths, but, in practice, felt most comfortable with and qualified to advise students using their own academic careers as a reference. Many faculty also reported that they expected students to come to them with a career choice and plan already in place, after which they would begin formal career advising. Unfortunately, students “did not generally hold well-formed understandings of their career options” outside of academia and “were unable to self-assess their own fit to various work roles” (Laursen et al., 2012, p. 4), preventing many from creating realistic career plans to present.

Helm et al. (2012) also discussed the growing gap between advising and realistic career paths, as their research confirmed the “structural imbalance in the number of new Ph.D.’s produced” (p. 6) and the number of available faculty positions in higher education, particularly in humanities fields. Doctoral advisors themselves, Helm et al. drew on their own experience to identify four types of students who are developed during socialization in a graduate program. Two of those types are students intending to pursue careers in academia; the third type is the student who pursues a faculty position, but who is “forc[ed]... to seek nonacademic positions” (p. 6); and the last is the student who never pursues a career in academia and seeks employment elsewhere. For students falling into the latter two categories, Helm et al. acknowledged that skills not inherent in many doctoral programs will be necessary; they name specifically “research, leadership, communication, administrative, interpersonal skills, and technology skills” (p. 7) as most desirable among doctoral graduates seeking non-academic employment. However, they also acknowledged that many faculty, with no experience working outside of academia, will find competently advising these students difficult, at the very least. Further, they argue that advisors
may be less incentivized to assist students in their pursuit of non-academic careers, as “academic culture… rewards faculty whose students obtain jobs at research [universities]” (p. 7). Even more problematic, as there is a general lack of tracking of Ph.D. graduates in terms of career path, many advisors mistakenly believe the academic placement of graduates to be much higher than it actually is, heightening the pressure to guide their own students into academic careers. Under these conditions, not only are students failed in terms of advising, but in professional socialization, as well:

As a result of the influence of key others in their professional socialization process, doctoral students may be internalizing a professional identity and role behaviors that are incongruent with who they are becoming and what they will be doing if they work in environments that differ from where they were educated. (p. 7)

Their study of doctoral students in various disciplines confirmed that students feel the negative effects of faculty advising, particularly as it relates to professional identity and job search preparation. Some students were left “feeling that faculty are just not adequately prepared to give advice on job searching and researching for nonacademic positions or that they were so overwhelmed with their own work that they cannot help students with their job searches” (p. 11). Helm et al. also learned that students rated job skill preparation within their academic programs fairly low, and overall felt “unprepared to perform the skills needed for academic and non-academic positions” (p. 12). In rating job-specific skills against how prepared students felt to perform those skills, “significant gaps in the importance students placed on skills that were important to their professional careers versus how well they felt they were being professionally prepared to perform these skills” (p. 11) were evident.
Students also reported that, during their degree programs, they were not given the time or resources to explore career options, and that attempting to do so simply delayed program completion (Laursen et al., 2012, pp. 4-5). This was echoed in Adler and Adler’s (2005) study, which discovered the students in their study were forced to reckon with writing a dissertation, teaching their assigned course load, and job searching all at once. Complicating matters, in order to make themselves marketable, students were first required to participate in appropriate vita-builders and establish their professional identities before beginning to apply for jobs. Lacking opportunities to participate in those activities within the formal curricula of their academic programs, many students were left floundering. Without appropriate guidance, students are unable to understand and adequately prepare for careers during their graduate programs and are unable to undertake the socialization and professionalization necessary to provide a smooth transition into the workforce upon graduation.

Lehker and Furlong confirmed this in their 2006 study: “Evidence suggests that today’s system of graduate education does not adequately prepare students for the needs of a changing workforce” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 73). While they acknowledged the role and importance of socialization in graduate programs, they also insisted that socialization alone “does not address necessarily the career needs of graduate and professional students” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 74), and advocated for the implementation of dedicated career services for graduate students. While, traditionally, programs and advisors have assumed that graduate students begin their programs with established career goals, there are many students who enter graduate programs with the intention of exploring career options, and who need career guidance of some kind (Lehker & Furlong, 2006 p. 74). Lehker and Furlong believed that, though graduate student career advising isn’t universally applicable, that “graduate students will be drawn to services and
resources they believe are designed specifically for them” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 75). They therefore suggested that there are four approaches to career services for graduate students: “Centralized; Academically Based; Campus Collaborations; A Developmental Approach” and should address four salient issues: “Exposure to career options; Non-academic career exploration; Job search support; Transitions from graduate school” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, pp. 75-79). In discussing the role of this proposed career services initiative, they described the main functions they see such a service fulfilling: “Career counseling and advising; Programming; Placement services; Alumni and networking resources” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, pp. 79-82).

Under a program structured by this outline, the onus of professional socialization and career preparation would be taken out of the hands of faculty advisors and mentors, and would, instead, rest with presumably neutral third parties. With such a system in place, while students would still be influenced by their program faculty, and perhaps even socialized primarily according to the values and norms associated with their programs, they would be able to make meaningful connections outside that relationship without potentially compromising their academic careers. Graduate students would also benefit from dedicated, professional career counseling, as well as programs designed to allow students to explore a multitude of career options.

**CPED Framework**

The Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate (CPED) currently exists as the only national organization that is both acknowledging the shift in direction among graduate students’ career choices, as well as working toward a change in doctoral education to accommodate students’ current goals. To be clear, the CPED initiative is focused specifically on schools of education and the education doctorate, or Ed.D.; however, much of their research and framework could easily be applied to other disciplines and degree programs. CPED’s mission is to “inspire
all schools of education to apply the CPED framework to the preparation of educational leaders to become well-equipped scholarly practitioners” via “quality, rigorous practitioner preparation” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). To achieve this, CPED has set in place a Framework of interconnected components, three of which are most applicable to this study:

- **Scholarly Practitioner**: “Scholarly Practitioners blend practical wisdom with professional skills and knowledge to name, frame, and solve problems of practice” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b).

- **Signature Pedagogy**: “Signature Pedagogy is the pervasive set of practices used to prepare scholarly practitioners for all aspects of their professional work” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b).

- **Mentoring and Advising**: In CPED programs, these should be focused on “equity and justice; mutual respect; dynamic learning; flexibility; intellectual space; supportive and safe learning environments; cohort and individualized attention; rigorous practices that set high expectations; and integration that aligns with adult learner needs” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b).

Through these elements of the Framework, CPED is encouraging change that addresses many of the concerns currently held by students in graduate, particularly doctoral, programs both in education and other disciplines. While the CPED Framework has been developed specifically for use by Ed.D. programs, there is a growing call for realignment of all doctoral programs, for which the CPED framework is entirely relevant. At the 2000 conference “Re-envisioning the Ph.D.,” Leroy Hood, former president and director of the Institute for Systems Biology, included as part of his keynote address an argument for realignment of doctoral programs as a response to
the evolving landscape of higher education. About skills Ph.D. students should develop during their time in academic programs, Hood asserted:

the changing world of employment for PhDs, an employment world that necessarily includes positions outside academe as well as in it, requires graduates to develop a philosophy about scholarship, education, and leadership; accommodate diversity; and understand how to continue to learn and adapt to changing situations. (Hood, 2000, as cited in Austin, 2002, p. 101)

The skills and socialization markers Hood highlighted in his address align almost exactly with the framework later developed by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), particularly the design concepts of Scholarly Practitioner, Signature Pedagogy, and Mentoring and Advising (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). It appeared that Hood recommended a realignment of the Ph.D. following the same or similar concepts now embraced by CPED to better prepare students for rapidly changing post-graduate opportunities. Socialization markers for Ph.D. students would then follow some of those currently existent for Ed.D. students.

The CPED Framework focuses heavily on professional socialization, particularly the integration of scholarly practice into students’ professional roles. This emphasis is both critical and practical, as most students who enter Ed.D. programs are already professionals in their fields of study whose practice would benefit from a purposeful, scholarly approach. Ed.D. students typically enter their doctoral programs with established professional identities, as well as an understanding of the norms and expectations associated with their professions; the socialization and professionalization process for these students must be different by default. To address this, the CPED approach “advocates that professional preparation take into account the role and
importance of inquiry, particularly as it is applied to practice, and strengthen it in professional doctoral preparation” (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 133). In order to judge how CPED-influenced programs were accomplishing this, Perry and Abruzzo undertook an analysis of CPED data in which they considered “how programmatic changes have supported the development of the core elements of socialization” (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 139) as outlined in the Weidman model. Using data from the 2010-2014 US Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) study, Perry and Abruzzo found that the CPED Framework not only helped faculty and institutions recognize the connection between students’ doctoral studies and professional practice, but also acted as a catalyst for change in program vision, mission, and re-design. Importantly, the Framework prompted programs to design courses based on the needs of working adult learners, to be practical and focused, and to integrate professional practice with classroom-based learning. This study also revealed that programs following the CPED method were more deliberate in supporting socialization by diversifying the instructor pool for their programs; instead of having only full-time tenured faculty as instructors, these programs were more likely to employ adjunct and clinical faculty who also held professional positions at the institution (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, pp. 140-141). The FIPSE study data suggested that the implementation of the CPED Framework as it relates to professional socialization was successful overall, and that “students saw their program as having given them tools for understanding and changing their local practice; and student mindsets and thinking about their professional work had changed” (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 142).

Perry and Abruzzo also analyzed the 2017 CPED report which focuses on how programs and faculty are implementing the Scholarly Practitioner portion of the Framework, particularly as it relates to “social justice and equity in schools, engaging diverse stakeholders and sharing
learning across these stakeholders” (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 141). They determined that programs had made efforts to meet the CPED requirements by having students interact with their communities via civic engagement projects; professional shadowing programs; guided field experiences and field-based assessments; and interacting with a wide range of faculty (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, pp. 141-142). Though student data was not collected in this study, the expected outcomes provided by programs gave insight into how programs will evaluate their students and “lends an understanding to the ways in which socialization in CPED-influenced EdD programs are different” (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 143). Programs expressed an expectation that students would be able to solve problems of practice and develop policy based on theory and inquiry; that they would emerge as leaders who, through the application of scholarly skills, will influence educational practice; and students would use their leadership positions to serve their communities and enact social justice (Perry & Abruzzo, 2020, p. 144).

While the benefits of the CPED model seem clear, it is important to note that it is not without its limitations and detractors. Given the slow-to-evolve nature of higher education in general, resistance to change is normal. However, there are specific concerns about implementing the CPED process that were uncovered by Perry et al. in their 2020 study of CPED member institutions regarding the challenges in beginning the CPED method. They uncovered four areas in which institutions had struggled, or were struggling, with implementing the Framework. First, perhaps unsurprisingly, was faculty resistance to the process. This was the most commonly reported impediment to implementation, and emerged from one of two viewpoints: first, that faculty members did not see the need for programmatic change, and second, that even if faculty were willing to embrace change, that they did not agree on just what that should entail. Interestingly, the majority of faculty members who resisted the change were
those who held Ph.D.s, and did not see the need to make changes specific to the Ed.D. Perry et al. ascertained that those who fell into this category “appeared to have a difficult time accepting the EdD as a practitioner degree rather than a theoretical/research degree” (p. 3), and may believe the Ed.D. to be inferior to the Ph.D. to begin with. Their resistance to change was reported as both overt and covert, being both vocally opposed to the CPED method and working behind the scenes to keep programs traditionally-based. While the CPED Delegates reported their efforts to engage and sway these faculty, it is likely that their resistance has had, and will continue to have, long-term negative effects on students. The CPED Framework is meant to be enacted by an entire department; without full buy-in from faculty, students may find that both their formal and information education and socialization is lacking due to faculty resistance.

Related to faculty resistance, specifically lack of understanding regarding the Ed.D., is the challenge of designing the dissertation in practice (DiP) process for professional students. Among faculty, particularly those with Ph.D.s who have taught in traditional doctoral programs, there is a lack of understanding of the elements that distinguish a DiP from a traditional dissertation, as well as confusion regarding how to mentor and advise students about the DiP process. The DiP is a critical component of not just the program itself, but also, in many cases, of students’ professional practice. A program or advisor being unclear about DiP expectations and requirements can derail students’ educational paths; without a strong guiding force during the dissertation process, programs will inevitably see poorly constructed DiPs. Delegates reported their efforts to remediate this by offering support to and seeking information for their colleagues, along with assisting with program and course redesign to support the DiP process.

Redesigning programs and courses is, itself, the third challenge reported in this study. Redesigning a program to fit the CPED Framework is a massive undertaking and was described
by Delegates as “building the plane while flying it” (Perry et al., 2020, p. 3). Delegates encountered a lack of shared understanding among program faculty and red tape in institutional procedures that hampered a smooth transition. Adding to the challenges inherent in building or redesigning a full program are the aforementioned issues: faculty resistance and design of the DiP process add additional complexity to an already massive undertaking. Delegates reported that their work as change agents helped to smooth the way during program redesign, and that “regular meetings, conversations and trainings with faculty colleagues and using CPED’s resources” (Perry et al., 2020, p. 4) were critical during the process.

Finally, students in the Ed.D. programs were reported to be a challenge by the Delegates interviewed for this study. Because Ed.D. students are practitioners first, their academic skills - particularly writing - were often lacking in academic quality. Delegates reported that, to address this, faculty engaged in more intensive advising and mentoring, redesigned courses, and provided additional support for writing. This more structured approach to student advising requires investment from all program faculty; such an approach would not work if there was any resistance to change. There would also be an increased time commitment on students’ parts, as intensive advising as well as seeking writing support would require additional time. As Ed.D. students are working professionals, this could pose a challenge for some. However, designing the program around students’ academic and socialization needs is a step in the right direction, and a positive in the CPED environment.

Of course, criticism of the Ed.D. is not limited to those who embrace the CPED method; in fact, there is a long-standing movement to eliminate the Ed.D. degree entirely in favor of one doctoral degree - the Ph.D. As outlined by Deering (1998), the main objection to the offering of two degree paths is that “although the PhD and EdD degrees were originally structured
differently and designed for different purposes, most of the important distinctions have become obscured over the years within many colleges of education” (p. 243). He went on to point out that many practitioners in education hold Ph.D. degrees, while many higher education faculty completed Ed.D. programs, exactly the reverse of what most doctoral programs espouse their purpose to be. Deering acknowledged that the primary difference between the two tracks lies with the dissertation models: Ph.D. dissertations should be scholarly while Ed.D. dissertations, or DiPs, should be applied. After a review of dissertation abstracts, though, he found a great deal of crossover between the two degree programs and concluded that the method of dissertation is likely more often a result of interest rather than policy. Dissertations were not the only area of crossover Deering found; in his study, “regardless of the degrees offered, [schools of education] have approximately one-third of their faculty holding the Ed.D.” (Deering, 1998, p. 247) rather than the Ph.D. that is typically associated with faculty.

Deering acknowledged the argument that “there is an exaggerated emphasis on research in traditional PhD. programs, which inhibits the graduate student's ability to secure a job” (Atwell, 1996 as cited in Deering, 1998, p. 247), an issue the Ed.D. is meant to directly address, but rejected it as unconvincing. He also pointed out that programs with two terminal degrees, the Ed.D. and Ph.D., bring only confusion to students and faculty about their expectations and outcomes. He went on to rehash the argument that the Ed.D. is inferior to the Ph.D., with less rigorous academic requirements and a non-scholarly dissertation. And while he ultimately rejected the latter argument as unfair to those with Ed.D.s, he also used it to state his opinion that the Ed.D. has outlived its purpose, and should be eliminated in favor of the Ph.D.

To be clear, Deering’s study was published before the inception of the CPED Framework, which subsequently addressed the majority of the issues he outlined. However, his
study gives room for introspection among Ed.D. programs, particularly those not affiliated with CPED: is the program different enough from the Ph.D. to be separate, particularly in terms of professional socialization approach and outcomes? This question is especially pertinent in the face of a growing movement to realign the Ph.D. to address the changing higher education landscape and doctoral graduates’ career prospects. For academic departments invested in retaining the Ed.D., and especially for departments hosting both doctoral options, it is incumbent upon faculty to ensure their programs provide students with superior academic and professional socialization, prepare students for realistic and evolving career options, and remain distinct enough to justify their continuance.
Overview of Plan for Manuscript 2

In Manuscript 2, I will outline my plan for a qualitative evaluation that aims to answer my five aforementioned evaluation questions. I chose an evaluation because of the focus on “address(ing) critical questions concerning how well a program, process, product, system, or organization is working,” and because it “should lead to a use of findings by a variety of stakeholders” (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009, p. 6, as cited in Lundquist, n.d.).

The goals of the evaluation are: 1) to explore students’ confidence in their career preparation during their programs and post-graduation; 2) to gain insight into how graduate programs prepare students for careers outside the faculty, and; 3) to find areas in which programmatic changes could be made to benefit students’ career outcomes. This evaluation will provide insight into the process of doctoral socialization and will allow program coordinators and faculty to develop and implement programmatic changes in order to better meet students’ professional needs.

To meet these goals, and to provide feedback and recommendations that are relevant to the needs of current programs, a qualitative approach will provide the best results. Qualitative research “relies on the participants to offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their experience” (Jackson II et al., 2007, p. 23), which will be useful in this study involving students, faculty, and graduates of different academic programs who, by default, will have had divergent experiences. Hammersley (2013) further defined qualitative research as:

a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the
research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis. (p. 12)

Hammersley also detailed the emergence of qualitative research from the need to study and observe people and situations in their natural environment, rather than engineered conditions; to allow participants to express their own perspectives; and to ensure the complexities of emerging concepts are not flattened. This focus on detail and the perspective of the research participants will give the highest probability of truly usable data across disciplines included in the study.

Research, in general, but particularly educational research is “filtered through a set of theoretical dispositions… [which affirm] the transparently appropriate nature of its ‘take’ on the research question and of the interpretive boundaries within which the answers are best offered” (Freebody, 2003, p. 72). The “interventionist role” (Freebody, p. 73) assumed by educational researchers requires that the theoretical approaches chosen “should be aimed at developing and applying a set of interpretive reasoning practices that give place, shape, contour and colour to what is relevant in the researchable field” (Freebody, p. 73), given the time, place, and historical context of that field. Theoretical approach, then, is a mechanism by which researchers may contextualize a study, frame resulting data, and inject validity into finding and recommendations. Considering that Freebody defined “the role of the qualitative researcher as, at the one time, a commentator, a collaborator and an educational activist” (p. 72), strong theoretical foundations are critical.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) fits well with this evaluation plan and will provide the most insight and benefits. The theory utilizes behavioral beliefs and attitudes, normative beliefs, and beliefs about one's control over a behavior to predict if and how a specific behavior might ultimately change. The TPB is relevant here because it will give the evaluation
team the opportunity to delve into the attitudes and normative beliefs surrounding graduate
student socialization and the role academic programs play in career preparation - which will
likely be different among faculty, students, and academic programs. Understanding these
attitudes and norms will be a guide to the remainder of the plan. Further, the TPB will allow the
evaluation team to gain some insight into the control beliefs of the individuals involved, which
will in turn indicate how much change is likely to be accepted at the end of the evaluation
(Ajzen, 2020; Collins & Carey, 2007; Fielding et al., 2008).

This evaluation will also rely on the Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) approach. The U-FE approach “facilitates a learning process in which people in the real world apply
evaluation findings and experiences to their work” (Ramirez & Broadhead, 2013, p. ii), is
primarily intended for evaluation data to be useful, and incorporates the intended users in the
evaluation process from the beginning. The U-FE approach aligns well with this evaluation
because of its focus on intended users. For this evaluation, using the U-FE approach will allow
faculty and students to guide the process, which is critical not only for their insight to the inner
workings of the programs, but also to build a sense of ownership in the process itself.

To produce high quality qualitative research, which can then support the validity of
resulting data and help guide conversations and recommendations, a set of overarching criteria is
needed to guide the approach, regardless of method and means. Tracy’s (2010) conceptualization
of “Eight Criteria of Quality in Qualitative Research” (p. 839) provides a set of guiding
principles for research that “that may be achieved through a variety of craft skills that are flexible
depending on the goals of the study and preferences/skills of the researcher” (p. 839). Tracy’s
criteria for quality in research are: “(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility,
(e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence” (p. 839).
Tracy names three goals for her conceptualization, two of which are directly applicable here: parsimony and the promotion of understanding and respect from those who may lack clear understanding of qualitative research. These eight criteria will be valuable in guiding the overall directionality of this evaluation, ensuring relevance to the current higher education landscape, and providing quality data that can be used to recommend needed pedagogical changes.

The planned evaluation will have two separate phases: an online questionnaire followed by group and individual interviews with participants who completed the initial questionnaire. Prior to determining the questions included in the first phase, the evaluation team will meet with faculty members of the selected academic departments for conversations about their programs’ structure, academics, student population, and current socialization efforts. It is likely that faculty and/or program coordinators will be able to provide degree plans, program sheets, and syllabi for their departments’ programs; it is also possible that some faculty will have information about student outcomes related to career preparedness and satisfaction, particularly those faculty who had close mentoring relationships with students. The outcomes of these conversations will likely guide the formation of many of the first phase questions for students and graduates.

The interviews that follow will likely include several questions or topics that emerge from the results of the questionnaire and will be semi-structured “to allow for more flexibility and responsiveness to emerging themes for both the interviewer and respondent” (Jackson II et al., p. 25). The evaluation team will ask some participants to join group discussions, while others will be interviewed individually; the group discussions will allow researchers to “observe a large amount of interaction among multiple participants on one or more topics in a limited amount of time” (Jackson II et al., p. 25), which may prove useful in comparing and contrasting student experiences.
Potential stakeholders involved in this evaluation will primarily be individuals within the departments assessed, though there will be others unaffiliated with the cooperating programs. This evaluation will focus on two departments: one department following traditional doctoral socialization and professionalization practices and one Ed.D. program following the CPED methodology and focused on non-traditional socialization. Stakeholders within these departments will be faculty, current students, and recent graduates. Of note will be faculty program coordinators and department chairs in these departments.

There will also be stakeholders outside of the departments to be assessed, including faculty and students in other departments/programs; Graduate School dean, associate dean, and administrators; Graduate Student Council (GSC) leadership; and wider University leadership, e.g., Provost, Dean of Students, Chancellor.
Conclusion

Socialization is one of the most important factors in graduate students’ ultimate career choices and is the primary vehicle through which the values and norms of a particular profession are transmitted to novices. Professionalization, as an aspect of socialization, is a critical component of graduate programs, and has a lasting impact on students, even post-graduation. Formal and informal socialization occur universally among graduate programs, yet disparately among graduate students, particularly those who do not fit the traditional, homogeneous mold of graduate students. Unfortunately, as socialization relies heavily on programs and faculty, continued homogenization is nearly inevitable without dedicated systems designed to encourage and foster diversity. This is particularly true of programs and institutions whose faculty do not understand the tremendous impacts that socialization can have on students, as well as the significant role faculty play in the socialization process.

While socialization is a main factor in post-graduate career choice, it is not the only influence graduate students are faced with. Students have become increasingly influenced by their own involvement in their graduate programs and the professional bodies with which those programs are associated. Though some programs mandate and monitor such involvement, many students report that peer and faculty mentors prompt their efforts, emphasizing the strong role faculty play in professional development in graduate programs. While faculty can be an invaluable resource in terms of career planning, they can play a negative role in some students’ experiences, valuing their own experiences and aspirations over students’, leading to reduced agency among students and continued homogeneity in graduate programs and careers.

In order to combat coercion and homogenization, the implementation of dedicated career services for graduate students has been suggested. Designed to assist students explore career
options outside of academia, such services could potentially have a positive impact on the rising number of doctoral students who, post-graduation, are unable to find full-time, tenured faculty positions. By taking career advising out of the hands of faculty, who typically work from their experiences and agendas, career centers could offer graduate students a neutral space in which they would be able to explore the career options available to them and find professional development opportunities outside their programs’ values and norms. However, such initiatives have not been implemented in enough institutions to have firm data about their long-term viability.

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate is addressing many of the issues plaguing today’s doctoral programs and students in a dynamic fashion. CPED is finding ways to innovate the Ed.D. process to prepare professional students to become scholarly practitioners and change agents in their own communities. This reimagining of the education doctorate addresses many of the historical concerns with the Ed.D., though it is not without its challenges and detractors. Implementing the CPED Framework is an intensive process that can be difficult and, at times, confusing. However, as the only current method to change doctoral education to meet students where they are, the CPED process is likely worth the pain implementation can cause.

Research (e.g., Gardner, 2008 & 2010; Hall & Burns, 2009; Laursen, et al., 2012; Lehker & Furlong, 2006; O’Meara, et al., 2014) suggested that traditional graduate programs are not socializing students for the changing workforce, specifically for careers outside the faculty. This is to the great detriment of graduate students who either have no interest in faculty roles, or who, upon graduation, are unable to find full-time, tenured positions. Addressing the homogeneity of most programs, and the faculty who perpetuate it, is critical in this changing higher education landscape. Mindfulness of the influences graduate students face is needed from faculty and
institutions, as is a dedication to career development and services to benefit graduate students, specifically. And even programs not open to becoming affiliated with CPED could informally implement much of the Framework to the benefit of their students and faculty. Finding ways to address the wholesale change in doctoral education and outcomes is imperative and must be undertaken before there is a total disconnect between academic preparation and professional life.
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ABSTRACT

In order to explore perspectives of graduate student socialization to practitioner careers in students’ fields of study, it is necessary to conduct a qualitative evaluation of both traditional Ph.D. and practitioner-focused Ed.D. programs. The evaluation will take place in two phases: a questionnaire followed by interviews and focus groups in which the evaluation team will seek to understand student experiences surrounding socialization and career choice, in the participants’ own words. A qualitative evaluation, guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework, will yield the data most relevant to answering the evaluation questions outlined in the next section.

The evaluation will be framed through concepts of graduate student socialization, influences on graduate students, graduate student career choice, and the CPED Framework. To gauge career preparedness, the evaluation will seek out various markers indicating proper socialization as outlined by existing literature.

This evaluation will examine the influence, if any, of socialization in doctoral programs as it concerns students who intend to pursue practitioner-based careers, and will provide insight into the gaps, if any exist, in student socialization. Further, it will allow program coordinators and faculty to develop and implement programmatic changes that will better meet students’ changing needs.
Guiding Problem and Questions

The purpose of planning this evaluation is to explore perspectives of graduate student socialization to practitioner careers in students’ fields of study. The goals of this evaluation are: 1) to determine the extent to which students feel confident in their career preparation during their programs and post-graduation; 2) to gain insight into how graduate programs prepare students for careers, particularly those outside the faculty, and; 3) to find areas in which programmatic changes could be made to benefit students’ career outcomes.

The questions for this evaluation are:

1. In what ways are instructors implementing career-focused socialization activities - formal and/or informal - within doctoral programs?
2. Within these socialization efforts, in what ways are students given opportunities to explore non-faculty career preparation and advancement?
3. How are students being socialized for careers outside academia, and in what ways does this differ from how students are being socialized for careers in academia?
4. How prepared do students feel for their chosen careers upon graduation?
5. How are graduates’ careers affected by socialization, or lack thereof, during their graduate programs?

These questions address the heart of the evaluation goals and align well with the overall purpose of the evaluation. Answering these questions will provide the insight necessary to recommend any needed programmatic changes.
Statement of the Problem of Practice

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) has determined that the problem of practice (PoP) for a dissertation in practice (DiP) should be “situated in their workplace setting, one that they wanted to improve or resolve,” (Buss, 2018, p. 41) and that candidates should “frame problems in situ” (Storey & Maughan, 2015, p. 14). In developing a PoP, Storey and Maughan (2015) suggested a four-stage process in which candidates determine if a PoP is authentic, relevant, and deserves scholarly inquiry; if so, candidates should then “articulate the PoP in meaningful and direct language” (p. 15).

In determining authenticity, self-reflection including consideration of limitations and biases is encouraged. In the following Reflection on Positionality, I describe the experience that led to identifying this PoP, and my own biases in beginning the associated research. My observations of doctoral programs, followed by the time now spent on my own doctoral studies, have given me insight into the problem as it occurs in real time.

Establishing the need for a solution follows as we determine relevance. The current situation regarding doctoral socialization is, at best, unclear; at worst, many doctoral graduates are leaving their programs of study wholly unprepared for the realities of their chosen professions. The ideal situation for all doctoral programs, both Ph.D. and Ed.D., is one in which students are aware before entering programs of the socialization efforts led and goals held by associated faculty. To bridge the gap between these two, a reasonable and actionable solution is needed.

In terms of researchability, framing this problem through a lens of socialization and the CPED framework will provide an abundance of resources that can guide the development of a relevant evaluation. Additionally, there exists broader research on graduate career choice, and
the influences that affect such, as well as associated research about faculty perceptions of their own roles in this process. Bringing all relevant research together will provide a solid foundation on which to build an evaluation and recommend necessary changes to doctoral socialization.

Finally, in articulating the problem: This evaluation will examine the influence, if any, of socialization in doctoral programs as it concerns students who intend to pursue practitioner-based careers, and will provide insight into the gaps, if any exist, in doctoral student socialization. Further, it will allow program coordinators and faculty to develop and implement programmatic changes in order to better meet students’ changing needs.
Conceptual Framework

“Conceptual frameworks are used in research for outlining possible options or for presenting the preferred approach, namely defining the problem and purpose, conducting a literature review, devising a methodology, data collection and final analysis” (Suman, 2014, p. 95). This conceptual framework has four elements, which are: the body of literature on graduate student socialization; the literature in relation to the influences on graduate students during their time in their doctoral programs; the literature concerning career choice among doctoral students; and how the framework outlined by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) influences practitioner-student success.

Graduate Student Socialization

Socialization among graduate students has been increasingly studied in recent years, along with the disparate effects differing types and levels of socialization have on students during their academic careers. Socialization is linked to student development and success, sense of belonging, and satisfaction with program of choice. It stands to reason that socialization is also a factor influencing student careers post-graduation, and that differing levels of socialization may lead to disparate levels of post-graduate student success in either practitioner or academic careers. John C. Weidman, Darla J. Twale, and Elizabeth L. Stein have developed a framework of graduate student socialization which has established:

that socialization into the professions is conceived as a series of processes whereby the novice: 1) enters the educational institution with values, beliefs, and attitudes about self and professional practices; 2) is exposed to various socializing influences while in school, including normative pressures exerted by faculty and peers, from society, professional organizations, professional practice, and non-educational reference groups; 3) assesses
the salience of the various normative pressures for attaining personal and professional goals, and 4) assumes, changes, or maintains those values, aspirations, identity and personal goals that were held at the onset of the socializing experience (Stein & Weidman, 1989, p. 14).

Their framework will be useful to this study as a way to interpret how the overall socialization process during students’ time in their graduate programs affects their professional outcomes.

Others have contributed significantly to the body of literature on graduate student socialization, as well. Much of the research outside the Weidman-Twale-Stein model focuses on faculty perspectives (e.g., Gardner, 2010b; Hermanowicz, 2016; Lechuga, 2011), underrepresented graduate student groups (e.g., Gardner, 2008), and disparities in academic environments (e.g., Liddell, et al., 2014; O’Meara, et al., 2014). Through her 2008 study of non-traditional doctoral students, Gardner found that high attrition rates in doctoral programs could be directly related to a failure in socialization, or a lack of students “fitting the mold” of their graduate programs. Gardner posited this failure is due to traditional socialization models having been almost exclusively focused on the historically homogenous doctoral student population - white males in their early 20s - and have not accounted for the diverse, non-normative experiences of those outside that population.

Of particular interest to this study are the implications of faculty perspectives of their roles in the socialization process, and how that can affect development of professional identity in students and their career outcomes. Because doctoral programs serve as the introduction to, and training for, students’ professional careers, both formal and informal socialization are critical to student development and success in graduate programs. Faculty are responsible for most of the
socialization during students’ time in their programs, both directly via active socialization and indirectly through the culture present in academic departments.

**Influences on Graduate Students**

Graduate students, specifically those in doctoral programs, are influenced heavily by their advisors, faculty, and peers. In some ways, doctoral students are often socialized to adapt their own thinking and pursuits to the interests and research endeavors of their program faculty. Faculty mentors and advisors, specifically, have a large sphere of influence over students; it is perhaps inevitable, then, that faculty mentors are able to leverage that influence to best suit their own interests, or the interests of their departments. This study is specifically interested in the level of influence programs and faculty have over doctoral students, and how that influence is used as it pertains to post-doctoral careers.

Student agency is critical in ensuring that the homogeneity that has, in the past, existed in doctoral programs does not continue, and that students are not coerced into traditional academic paths based on the preferences and beliefs of program faculty. The relationship between faculty members, particularly advisors and mentors, and students is greatly unequal and vulnerable to coercion; the larger academic environment of a department also plays a role in either increasing or decreasing student agency. How student agency is affected will be a significant indicator of the influence and socialization - or lack thereof - students experience. O’Meara, et. al. presented a model of influence which is focused on graduate student agency and the ways in which graduate departments influence career advancement. Their findings outline five ways in which departments enable or influence graduate student agency in career advancement (O'Meara, et al., 2014) which will provide a useful framework for categorizing the different types and levels of influence students experience during their time in their graduate programs.
Graduate Student Career Choice

Post-graduate career choice among doctoral students is a relatively new topic. Until recently, doctoral programs prepared students to enter the faculty profession; the emergence of specialized doctoral programs that give students the opportunity to continue in their career fields has placed a burden of choice on students that did not previously exist. However, with the number of full-time, tenured faculty roles slowly declining, it is a choice with which more doctoral students than ever are faced. The literature on graduate student career choice specifically focuses on faculty involvement, student career services, and opportunities for hands-on learning while in the program. Of particular interest are the ways in which the Weidman-Twale-Stein model of socialization “does not address necessarily the career needs of graduate and professional students” and “could benefit from services designed to help them identify and explore their career interests” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006).

Given the current climate surrounding careers in academia, it is especially important that students receive the opportunity and guidance necessary to explore career options outside the faculty. Exposure to multiple career paths is critical to students during their time in doctoral programs, and greatly impacts both student agency and post-graduate career success. However, research (e.g., Hall & Burns, 2009; Lechuga, 2014; O’Meara, et al., 2014) suggests that, as with socialization, faculty knowledge and involvement is key to socializing students to alternate career paths, and many academic departments simply do not have faculty who are able or willing to advocate for alternate careers.

This study is interested in how all elements of career choice among doctoral students affect the ultimate decision of whether to enter the full-time faculty or to seek a career outside of
academe, on the assumption that some students do not enter doctoral programs with solid career aspirations.

**CPED Framework**

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate is the only established, national body that is addressing the change of direction being undertaken by many doctoral students, as well as the shift higher education, in general, is making in terms of faculty and tenure. The CPED Framework has been developed specifically to encourage schools of education to design doctoral programs focused on “quality, rigorous practitioner preparation” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021), rather than extending the traditional focus on preparation of future faculty. Though the CPED Framework consists of three separate components, one will be of most use to this study: Design Concepts on which to Build Programs. Of particular interest to this study are three elements therein: Scholarly Practitioner; Signature Pedagogy; and Mentoring and Advising (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021). Each of these concepts is aimed at producing doctoral graduates who capable of practice at high levels, and whose careers will benefit from practitioner-focused programming. As the Framework is currently in practice in over 100 institutions, there should be abundant sample data.

The CPED Framework, while a bold step in a new direction of doctoral education, is not without its detractors. As outlined by Perry, Zambo, and Abruzzo (Perry et al., 2020), there are inherent challenges associated with designing or redesigning doctoral programs to follow the guidelines laid forth by CPED. Of particular concern are the resistance by faculty to the process itself, along with the challenges inherent to building programs around an evolving and emerging concept. There is also some data to suggest that, in many academic programs, there is too little distinction between traditional Ph.D. and the Ed.D. programs, leading some to believe that the
Ed.D. should be eliminated altogether. While these challenges do not invalidate the Framework itself, they certainly give room for thought and discussion.

**Markers of Socialization**

In order to recognize and evaluate the efficacy of socialization activities within academic programs, and to discuss perceptions of socialization with multiple audiences, markers - or indicators - of socialization must first be identified and outlined. Appropriate socialization of graduate students is a particularly complex idea, in which the actual and the ideal are not always well aligned. As in other areas of life, during graduate programs “individuals are socialized to various careers through experiences and communication with others” (Powers & Meyers, 2016, p. 410). In this context, those experiences will be the formal and informal socialization activities geared toward students during their time in an academic program, and the relevant communication will be with instructors and faculty mentors, as well as peers. However, it can be difficult to determine if the existing experiences and communications are preparing students for careers within, much less outside, academia. Helm et al. (2012) found that modern competency areas such as diversity, learning outcomes, technology, and entrepreneurship are simply not part of the professionalization structure of doctoral programs, even though these professional knowledge areas have become a requirement for graduates anticipating entering the faculty (p. 6). Austin (2002) claimed that part of the reason for this lies in a typical university and program structure which “serves as much to make the institutions work effectively as to prepare graduate students for future professional roles” (p. 95). She further claimed that the research missions present at most colleges and universities are greatly supported by the work of graduate students who serve as research and teaching assistants for faculty. Markers of adequate socialization in
graduate students are therefore typically secondary to the overall mission of the departments and the larger university system and are often overlooked in the interests of the larger mission.

While Austin’s focus is on how such systems provide inadequate preparation for graduates entering the faculty, her research also supports a lack of career socialization for students entering other career fields, a growing circumstance which she acknowledged by stating upfront that “many PhDs will work outside of academe instead of becoming professors” (p. 95). In what can be construed as realistic advice for doctoral students, Austin suggested that “those who aspire to be faculty members should learn about the job options outside academe given the limits to employment opportunities within the academy,” (p. 101) though her research does not delve into the applicability of present socialization models to those who choose, or are forced into, careers outside academia. However, she included a statement from Leroy Hood, then president and director of the Institute for Systems Biology, who, at a conference focused on Ph.D. realignment, argued that:

the changing world of employment for PhDs, an employment world that necessarily includes positions outside academe as well as in it, requires graduates to develop a philosophy about scholarship, education, and leadership; accommodate diversity; and understand how to continue to learn and adapt to changing situations. (Leroy Hood, 2000, as cited in Austin, 2002)

It is worth noting that the socialization markers Hood highlighted in his presentation align almost exactly with the later-developed framework of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), particularly the design concepts of Scholarly Practitioner, Signature Pedagogy, and Mentoring and Advising (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). Though the CPED Framework focuses specifically on the Ed.D., it appears that Hood was recommending a
realignment of the Ph.D. that would follow the same or similar concepts as a response to the changing landscape of higher education. In this case, the same or similar CPED-aligned socialization markers could realistically be used for both Ph.D. and Ed.D. students.

Realignment of socialization goals in graduate programs is not a new concept, nor are Hood’s recommendations far-fetched. Indeed, as graduate students’ career outlooks have changed, so too have some approaches to adequate professional socialization, even at the theoretical level. During the data analysis portion of their study on socialization within tourism and hospitality education, Sonnenschein et al. (2018) contributed to a revised version of Weidman, Twale, and Stein’s (2001) “Conceptualizing Graduate and Professional Student Socialization” (Figure 1, see Appendix A), which Sonnenschein et al. (p. 1292) have titled “Higher Education Students’ Professional Socialization” (Figure 2, see Appendix A). In developing the initial framework, Weidman et al. argued that, in order “to understand professional socialization, the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of students’ experience in universities must be taken into account” (Weidman et al., as cited in Sonnenschein et al., 2018, p. 1289). To this end, the graduate program - including university and department culture and existing socialization process - form the core of the original model. The four ellipses surrounding the core of this model are intended to represent the factors outside a university community that impact student professional socialization and include Professional Communities and Novice Professional Practitioners (Weidman et al., 2001). While Weidman et al. intended for the outlying elements to play integral roles in student socialization and professionalization, those elements remain external to graduate programs themselves; within this framework, there is no imperative for specific program-based professional socialization.
Sonnenschein et al. addressed this in their revised framework, which also provided some markers of appropriate socialization for professional careers. The core of this revised framework is titled “Higher education socialization processes and career development,” and emphasized the need for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Interactions with specific populations as integral components of professional socialization (Sonnenschein et al., 2018). These are significant deviations from the original framework, and provide a more modern, practitioner-based approach to socialization. Sonnenschein et al. have placed WIL as a core component of professional socialization, whereas Weidman et al. relegated Employers to an outer ring of their framework and considered the majority of professionalization to be “not under control of the academic program area” (Weidman et al., as cited in Sonnenschein et al., 2018, p. 1293), though possibly impactful of the overall graduate experience. Sonnenschein et al. found in their study that most of their respondents “recommended the introduction of an internship program embedded in the degree, which would allow the students to develop relevant attributes for their future career and give them a competitive advantage in recruitment” and “enable students to have realistic expectations of their future professional positions” (p. 1293). There is also a specific focus on Interactions within the core of the revised framework; Sonnenschein et al. included among these recommended interactions academics, students, graduates, and managers, though it is easy to see how this group could be expanded or retracted as needed to fit the specific needs of an academic program. Their study affirmed that it can be “advantageous for students’ socialization into a career in the industry that more networking with academics, peers and graduates is developed” and that relationship-building within a professional community could lead to the development of realistic professional expectations and outlooks (p. 1293).
This revised framework also included ellipses with external elements, including Industry Sector and Graduates, which would be largely outside the control or oversight of an academic program (Sonnenschein et al., 2018). However, the bulk of recommended professional socialization exists in the framework’s core, and within the graduate program itself. The elements contained within this framework provide excellent markers which can be identified as present or missing in graduate programs; they are specific enough to provide benchmarks, but universal enough to fit the needs of various graduate programs.

Doctoral realignment was also the purpose of a 2000 study and conference titled “Re-envisioning the Ph.D. to meet the needs of the 21st Century,” at which participants worked to create a set of recommendations for how doctoral education should evolve to meet the changing needs of doctoral graduates and society at large (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000b). In an amalgamation of concerns from multiple sources, one student concern relevant to professionalization stands out:

What counts as professional preparation is too narrowly defined. Students pursue doctorates for a variety of reasons: for the love of the subject-matter, to do research, to teach, to obtain the credential to work at a certain level in industry or secondary education administration, or to figure it out along the way. These reasons are usually much more varied than the career paths their departmental cultures or professors are equipped to help them achieve. Doctoral students reported wanting more concrete exposure to varied options and multiple contexts in which to apply their hard-won knowledge and skills. (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000a, p. 13)

Results from the study and conference that followed “revealed several skills that are important to careers outside of academia for Ph.D. graduates. For example, research, leadership,
communication, administrative, interpersonal skills, and technology skills were listed as skills that employers seek from Ph.D. graduates” (Nyquist & Wulff, 2000, as cited in Helm et al., 2012). So, to find evidence of more broadly defined professional socialization, perhaps looking for evidence of the aforementioned skills sought by prospective employers would give the most insight.

Earlier studies of both undergraduate and graduate students can provide more basic insights into socialization markers, though they can be differently termed. Tinto (2012), in particular, used the terms “social integration,” “academic integration,” and “persistence” (p. 232) to describe the markers recently referred to as relating to socialization. Tinto used academic integration here as shorthand for the various academic factors that play roles in student success and persistence, e.g., “academic performance, level of intellectual development, and perception of having a positive experience in academic settings” (Lakhal, et al., 2020, p. 4). In correlation with academic integration, Tinto (1975) characterized “social integration” as students’ interactions with peers and participation in the social environment of a campus (p. 92). While these two integrations can play a role in persistence, Tinto argued that they are separate, and that they are not both strictly required for student success, claiming that “a person may be able to achieve integration in one area without doing so in the other” (p. 92), with possible negative outcomes associated with integration in just one area. Academic integration, though, is critical to future professional success, “because of the direct relationship between a person's participation in the academic domain of the college and his future occupational attainment (e.g., as reflected in academic attainments and occupational role socialization)” (Spady, 1970, p.78, as cited in Tinto, 1975, p. 92). Knowing this, a possible marker for sufficient socialization could be as simple as students’ grades in program courses. However, before using grades as a benchmark, it would be
wise to consider the alignment, or lack thereof, of the coursework with professional norms and desired aptitudes.

In characterizing “persistence,” Tinto (2012) described it as being “shaped by the personal and intellectual interactions that occur within and between students and faculty and the various communities that make up the academic and social systems of the institution” (p. 231), which strongly mirrors Weidman et al.’s 2001 framework of student socialization. Tinto (2012) also included as part of his theory on graduate persistence the reality that

the primary reference groups for doctoral students, as opposed to undergraduates
generally, are the more local student and faculty communities that reside in the schools, programs, and departments that house the specific fields of study in which the doctoral degree is pursued. (pps. 231-232)

Because of this, Tinto concluded that the process and outcomes of persistence would rely on the structures and norms of individual departments, themselves, and that both of those variables are subject to periodic change. Following this line of reasoning, it would make sense to assume that, while some commonality will exist across all graduate programs, some of the markers of socialization will be both program- and time-specific. Indeed, according to Tinto (2012, p. 232), many differences in socialization may exist even within an academic department because of the varying norms and socialization efforts among program faculty. Going further, if one considers the inherent differences between the Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs, there will also certainly be different markers of socialization that exist in students of those degree programs, even within the same department. Knowing this, it would perhaps be most objective and equitable to base at least some socialization markers on the norms and standards of degrees within academic departments at the time of evaluation.
In his description of graduate persistence, Tinto also included an element of professionalization, which he recognized as being reflective of the norms of local and external reference groups, as well as an anticipatory entry to students’ chosen professions (2012, p. 233). To this point, Tinto observed that, as they anticipate entry to a professional field, students “are likely to orient themselves toward the norms that they perceive as determining success in that field of work” (2012, p. 233). In most graduate programs, students’ primary, if not sole, orientation to the norms of anticipated career fields is the “local community” (Tinto, 2012), or academic program and/or department of which they are members. As Tinto concluded, the success of that strategy is entirely dependent on the congruence of the norms displayed within local communities and the norms of external, or professional, communities sought by students (2012, p. 234). Markers of professional socialization in this case, then, would include an evaluation of professional norms and students’ exposure to them during their academic careers. Included would be the presence or absence of professionalization efforts sponsored by, but external to, an academic department (i.e., socialization in the external community).

In their study on academic and social integration in a specific set of blended synchronous courses (BSC), Lakhal, et al. (2020) found “ Appropriateness of pedagogical strategies” (p. 8) as one of the main themes emerging from their interview process, with one relevant sub-theme, “1) course content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies” (p. 8). In this sub-theme, Lakhal et al. found that, for students in these courses, practical instruction was ultimately more beneficial than a more theoretical approach. These particular BSC courses are designed for classroom teachers to improve their practice; in the courses, many of the instructors “give concrete examples based on their own teaching experience” (p. 8) and shared their own professional strategies and experiences. The usefulness of this practitioner approach was noted by both
students and fellow instructors who found that it not only helped them improve their own practice, but also impacted student persistence (p. 9).

In the second main theme that emerged from this study, the sub-theme “Instructors’ and teaching assistants’ attitude” (p. 10) is applicable here, given the emphasis on academic integration, particularly students’ perceptions of positive interactions with faculty and the impact of those interactions of persistence and success. This study revealed that “having instructors with significant experience and a clear vision of the objectives to be achieved in the course helps to ensure course quality” (p. 10), and that instructors’ “attitude, openness, enthusiasm and support play an important role in students’ academic and social integration” (p. 11). Lakhal et al.’s study focused on a very specific set of coursework targeted at a narrow audience; however, the approach of these courses was practitioner-oriented, practitioner-taught, and student-centered. Following their model, then, would allow markers of professional socialization to exist within academic courses, programs, and faculty, rather than with the students alone.

Considering all of this, desired socialization markers in academic programs and graduating students could be:

- Grades and/or GPA
- Leadership
- Accommodation of diversity
- Adaptability
- Work-Integrated Learning experiences
- Interpersonal skills
- Interactions with professionals in both local and external communities
- Realistic professional expectations
• Practitioner-based coursework
• Practitioner-Instructors
• Student-focused curricula

Because, as Tinto pointed out, socialization will differ even within academic departments, it is critical that each program be individually evaluated prior to evidence of these markers being sought. Such an evaluation of programs should include questions pertaining to:

• Integration of academic curricula with desired professional aptitudes, norms, and skills
• Work-Integrated Learning opportunities
• Formalized opportunities for internal professional socialization
• Formalized opportunities for external professional socialization
• Recent and relevant practitioner experience of instructors

It is assured that such an evaluation of programs will uncover both different opportunities and different eventual markers and outcomes for students. However, having this baseline will allow for the integration of some updated norms in the broader scope of graduate education.
Methodology and Theory

To obtain the data necessary to recommend appropriate programmatic interventions, a qualitative evaluation of both traditional Ph.D. and practitioner-focused Ed.D. programs will be conducted. An evaluation is appropriate here because of the focus on “address[ing] critical questions concerning how well a program, process, product, system, or organization is working,” and because it “should lead to a use of findings by a variety of stakeholders” (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009, p. 6, as cited in Lundquist, n.d.). An evaluation offers the opportunity to “critically analyze its different outcomes and characteristics, to help… measure… success” while following a “valid, reliable, and practical” process (FormPlus, n.d.). Importantly, “good evaluation helps people make better decisions for better outcomes” (Better Evaluation, n.d.), which is critical when considering the outcome here involves student career choice and preparedness.

The goals of this evaluation are: 1) to determine the extent to which students feel confident in their career preparation during their programs and post-graduation; 2) to gain insight into how graduate programs prepare students for careers, particularly those outside the faculty, and; 3) to find areas in which programmatic changes could be made to benefit students’ career outcomes. This evaluation will provide insight into the gaps, if any exist, in student socialization, and will allow program coordinators and faculty to develop and implement programmatic changes to better meet students’ changing needs.

To meet these goals, and to provide feedback and recommendations that are relevant to the needs of current students and programs, a qualitative approach will provide the best results. Qualitative research “relies on the participants to offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their experience” (Jackson II et al., 2007, p. 23), which will
be useful in this study involving students, faculty, and graduates of different academic programs who, by default, will have had divergent experiences. Hammersley (2013) further defined qualitative research as:

- a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis. (p. 12)

Hammersley also detailed the emergence of qualitative research from the need to study and observe people and situations in their natural environment, rather than engineered conditions; to allow participants to express their own perspectives; and to ensure the complexities of emerging concepts are not flattened. Mariampolski (2001) further asserted that qualitative research “yields a holistic overview of consumer behavior which provides insights into emotions and motivations” and that “the achievement of understanding happens in real time through a personal confrontation with respondents” (p. 55), as opposed to the statistical data that emerges from quantitative research. Using qualitative methods will also allow for “intensive understanding of consumer needs, wishes, problems, dissatisfactions and work-arounds can suggest better ways of serving” (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 36) current and future students in the affiliated academic programs. This focus on detail and the perspective of the research participants will give the highest probability of truly usable data across disciplines included in the study.

Research, in general, but particularly educational research is “filtered through a set of theoretical dispositions… [which affirm] the transparently appropriate nature of its ‘take’ on the research question and of the interpretive boundaries within which the answers are best offered”
The “interventionist role” (Freebody, p. 73) assumed by educational researchers requires that the theoretical approaches chosen “should be aimed at developing and applying a set of interpretive reasoning practices that give place, shape, contour and color to what is relevant in the researchable field” (Freebody, p. 73), given the time, place, and historical context of that field. Theoretical approach, then, is a mechanism by which researchers may contextualize a study, frame resulting data, and inject validity into findings and recommendations. Considering that Freebody defined “the role of the qualitative researcher as, at the one time, a commentator, a collaborator and an educational activist” (p. 72), strong theoretical foundations are critical.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) fits well with this evaluation plan and will provide the most insight and benefits. The theory utilizes behavioral beliefs and attitudes, normative beliefs, and beliefs about one's control over a behavior to predict if and how a specific behavior might ultimately change. The TPB relies on both subjective norms and a participant’s attitude toward a specific behavior to form predictions about the participant’s ultimate choice to perform the behavior or not. Simply put, “the more favorable the attitude towards the behavior, the stronger should be the individual's intention to perform it” (Armitage and Connor, 2001, p. 474), while also taking into consideration that “if an individual perceives that significant others endorse (or disapprove of) the behavior, they are more (or less) likely to intend to perform it” (Armitage and Connor, 2001, p. 474). Researchers must also account for the intentions of the individual before making predictions about future behavior, as these “are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior and to indicate how hard people are willing to try or how much effort they would exert to perform the behavior” (Azjen, 1991, p. 181, as cited in Armitage and Connor, 2001, p. 477), while also recording participants’ perceptions of any other
internal or external elements that may influence their behavior and cause them or act toward or against their intentions.

The TPB is relevant here because it will give the evaluation team the opportunity to delve into the attitudes and normative beliefs surrounding graduate student socialization and the role academic programs play in career preparation - which will likely be different among faculty, students, and academic programs. Understanding these attitudes and norms will be a guide to the remainder of the plan. Further, the TPB will allow the evaluation team to gain some insight into the control beliefs of the individuals involved, which will in turn indicate how much change is likely to be accepted at the end of the evaluation (Ajzen, 2020; Collins & Carey, 2007; Fielding et al., 2008). While there are no guarantees or absolutes in behavior prediction, Armitage and Connor (2001) found that “of 185 independent studies published up to the end of 1997, the TPB accounted for 27% and 39% of the variance in behavior and intention, respectively,” (p. 471) which lends credence to its usage for behavior prediction in this evaluation.

This evaluation will also rely on the Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) approach. The U-FE approach begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design any evaluation with careful consideration of how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use. (Patton, 2012, p. 4)

The framework “facilitates a learning process in which people in the real world apply evaluation findings and experiences to their work” (Ramírez & Broadhead, 2013, p. ii), is primarily intended for evaluation data to be useful, and incorporates the intended users in the evaluation process from the beginning. Patton (2012) further asserted that U-FE promotes “situational
responsiveness” (p. 5) during the evaluation process, allowing for the evaluation to be tailored to the “needs of specific users, the level at which the evaluation is undertaken, the different perspectives of those stakeholders participating in the evaluation and the identity of the main stakeholders” (Briedenhann and Butts, 2005, p. 237). Importantly, because of the focus on incorporating intended users from the beginning of the process, the U-FE framework increases the likelihood of data and recommendations being used at the completion of the evaluation process while at the same time training intended users in the applied use of the resulting data (Patton, 2012; Ramírez and Broadhead, 2013).

The U-FE approach itself does not require adherence to a specific theory or method; instead, it is a framework which “can include a wide variety of evaluation methods within an overall participatory paradigm” (Ramírez and Broadhead, 2013, p. 1) and is aimed at assisting the evaluation team and participants in making decisions about issues that arise during the process. To accomplish this, Patton (2012) outlined a 17-step process by which evaluators could effectively use U-FE; Ramírez and Broadhead (2013) focused on 12 overlapping steps, which is more appropriate for this evaluation. The steps, in order, are:

1. Assessing Program Readiness: Essentially, determining if everyone who will be involved in the evaluation are ready to undertake the process.
2. Assessing Evaluators’ Readiness: Ensuring that the evaluation team and facilitators are ready to undertake the evaluation process.
3. Identifying Primary Intended Users: The evaluators identifying the people and groups who “have a direct, identifiable stake in the evaluation and its use” (Ramírez and Broadhead, 2013, p. 3), along with their needs. Because of U-FE’s focus on intended users and the usefulness of collected data, this step is critical.
4. Situational Analysis: The evaluation team should review the contextual aspects surrounding the evaluation, including “previous evaluation experience, resources available for, and priority given to the evaluation, its relationship to overall organizational development” (Ramírez and Broadhead, 2013, p. 3), timing of the evaluation, organizational culture, etc.

5. Identification of Primary Intended Uses: Because U-FE also focuses on evaluation data being useful, the evaluation team should understand the intended use of the anticipated data from the outset.

6. Focusing on the Evaluation: After establishing the primary intended uses of the evaluation, the evaluators should develop the evaluation questions that address the intended uses.

7. Evaluation Design: Methods should be chosen to ensure the evaluation will gather the data necessary to answer the evaluation questions.

8. Simulation of Use: At this stage, data are fabricated in order to verify that the evaluation questions will be answered in ways that provide usable information.

9. Data Collection: Keeping the evaluation questions and primary intended use in mind, data is collected via agreed-upon methods.

10. Data Analysis: The evaluators and primary intended users should analyze the data after it has been collected; primary intended users who do not participate in this step should be kept informed.

11. Facilitation of Use: “In UFE, the evaluator is committed to facilitating the use of the evaluation, recognizing that other factors will inevitably play a critical role in facilitating or inhibiting the use of findings” (Ramírez and Broadhead, 2013, p. 5). A central step to
U-FE, evaluators should work with primary intended users to clarify findings and their usefulness, to recommend and implement changes based on those findings, and strategize further use.

12. Meta Evaluation: Once all previous steps have been completed, the evaluators should find whether the evaluation data was used by primary intended users as it was intended to be used at the beginning of the evaluation process. (Ramírez and Broadhead, 2013, pp. 3-5)

The U-FE approach aligns well with this evaluation because of its focus on intended users. For this evaluation, using the U-FE approach will allow faculty and students to guide the process, which is critical not only for their insight to the inner workings of the programs, but also to build a sense of ownership in the process itself. Input, insight, and understanding among participants will further increase the likelihood of the evaluation data being used and recommendations followed.

To produce high quality qualitative research, which can then further support the validity of resulting data and help guide conversations and recommendations, a set of overarching criteria is needed to guide the approach, regardless of method and means. Tracy’s (2010) conceptualization of “Eight Criteria of Quality in Qualitative Research” (p. 839) provides a set of guiding principles for research that “that may be achieved through a variety of craft skills that are flexible depending on the goals of the study and preferences/skills of the researcher” (p. 839). Tracy’s criteria for quality in research are: “(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence” (p. 839). Qualitative research, according to Tracy’s criteria, should be “relevant, timely, significant,” (p. 840) and compelling either theoretically or contextually. It should also, in
contrast to succinct quantitative research, be “marked by a rich complexity of abundance” (p. 841) in descriptions of the participants’ experiences and perspectives. Tracy further defined “sincerity” as the ultimate goal of a process of “self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing” (p. 841); essentially, ensuring the transparency and integrity of research, along with acknowledging researchers’ biases and goals. The inclusion of “credibility” here is also concerned with integrity, but more specifically of the data itself, which should be marked by “trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility” (p. 842), as well as thick descriptions. Tracy also argued that qualitative research should resonate with an audience, and ideally have a transformative effect outside the initial participating population. In further defining the “significant contribution” requirement, Tracy offered that research might be significant theoretically, heuristically, practically, or methodologically (p. 846), allowing evaluators to determine how to best align their research. The requirement here for research to be ethical envelops many of the aforementioned suggestions but goes further in stating that “ethics are not just a means, but rather constitute a universal end goal of qualitative quality itself” (p. 846). Finally, Tracy defined her last component, “meaningful coherence,” as qualitative studies that “(a) achieve their stated purpose; (b) accomplish what they espouse to be about; (c) use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms; and (d) attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research foci, methods, and findings” (p. 848). This component aligns well with the final steps of U-FE and might be incorporated into the meta-evaluation required by that framework.

Tracy named three goals for this eight-part conceptualization, two of which are directly applicable here: parsimony and the promotion of understanding and respect from those who may lack clear understanding of qualitative research. These eight criteria will be valuable in guiding
the overall directionality of this evaluation, ensuring relevance to the current higher education landscape, and providing quality data that can be used to recommend needed pedagogical changes.
Implementation

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

This evaluation will have two separate phases: an online questionnaire followed by focus groups and individual interviews with participants who completed the initial questionnaire. Prior to determining the questions included in the first phase, the evaluation team will assess faculty interest in conversations about their programs’ structure, academics, student population, and current socialization efforts. Adhering to U-FE guidelines requires the involvement of primary intended users from the outset of the evaluation, so the evaluation team should make every reasonable effort to involve program faculty to the extent of their interest. If there is a high level of interest among faculty, the assessment team can host a pre-evaluation meeting during which faculty may provide information about their programs and socialization activities and make suggestions regarding questions to include. If there is a lower level of interest among faculty, the assessment team can choose to prepare the questionnaire first, then send it to faculty for feedback. In either scenario, it is likely that faculty and/or program coordinators will be able to provide degree plans, program sheets, and syllabi for their departments’ programs that will give the assessment team more insight when formulating questions. It is also possible that some faculty will have information about student outcomes related to career preparedness and satisfaction, particularly those faculty who had close mentoring relationships with students. At the administrative level, programs should be able to provide contact information for graduates of the previous three to five years, which the evaluation team can use to build a list of prospective participants. If programs are unable to provide such information, or if that information seems incomplete, the Office of Alumni Affairs may be of assistance in obtaining contact information. Reaching out to prospective participants via email will likely be the best method of contact;
doing so will allow the evaluation team to send context information about the evaluation and goals along with the invitation to participate. Email is also low-stakes on potential participants’ parts, and will give them time to consider the request before responding.

The questionnaire will be distributed via Qualtrics to a large number of current students and recent graduates identified by programs; it will include a broad range of both multiple choice and short answer questions that are not program-specific. These questions will focus on socialization activities; career exploration and preparation opportunities; and perception of attitudes toward non-traditional career paths, among others. Though questionnaires and surveys are more typically used in quantitative research, their use in qualitative studies can be a practical way of gaining “insights into social trends, processes, values, attitudes, and interpretations” and constructing “a framework for the in-depth interviews, allowing key themes, concepts, and meanings to be teased out and developed” (McGuirk & O’Neill, 2016, pp. 10-11). The evaluation team will take care in formulating the questions to ensure they are clear and concise, while also providing enough contextual information to ensure respondents’ understanding, which will lead to more accurate data (Adamson, et al., 2004). The questionnaire can also serve as an icebreaker, or introduction to the issues surrounding this evaluation, and give respondents the opportunity to respond to more basic questions that will allow them to begin thinking about more in-depth issues (Adamson, et al., 2004). As McGuirk and O’Neill (2016) observed, providing a questionnaire first also allows respondents time and privacy to consider their responses to questions that may be sensitive or evoke strong emotions. Answers to these questions will help guide the interviews that follow and may lead to the development of some additional interview questions.
Using Qualtrics will simplify both the distribution of the questionnaire as well as the data collection process. Qualtrics itself gathers and records data from all respondents, then stores it for future use. Qualtrics can also create randomized IDs for respondents, so participants may feel more comfortable answering questions freely, as their identities will be protected. Conducting the first phase of the evaluation online is also a more time- and cost-effective method, eliminating the need for printed materials, space use, and potential travel. Using Qualtrics to distribute the questionnaire online also allows the evaluation team to reach a population that may be geographically diverse enough to prohibit travel (McGuirk & O’Neill, 2016).

After the questionnaires have been collected and analyzed, the team will conduct both individual and group interviews with participants who provided contact information on the questionnaire expressing their interest in involvement during the second phase of the evaluation. Given that interviews are typically conversational, and therefore familiar and comfortable to participants, interviews “allow people to ascribe meanings to their experiences” (Leavy, 2017; Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 202, as cited in Leavy, 2017). In this evaluation, the perspectives of participants will be critical to understanding professional socialization within academic programs from a firsthand viewpoint, and interviews will allow those perspectives to be heard without the constraints of quantitative methods. The interviews will be semi-structured to allow an open dialogue which participants can partially guide, while still focusing the conversation on the preset questions. Semi-structured interviews allow the moderator “a greater say in focusing the conversation on issues that he or she deems important in relation to the research project” (Brinkmann, 2018, p. 1002), giving the moderator the flexibility to pursue markers, or “a different topic… worth returning to for exploration” (Leavy, 2017, p. 141) mentioned by participants. Markers commonly lead to additional information important to the full picture in an
evaluation, and often pertain to areas the evaluation team did not know to form questions around. Giving moderators the freedom to pursue those markers will reveal information that would not otherwise come out, particularly in a more highly structured interview (Leavy, 2017), and may lead to insights the evaluation team was not expecting or had not considered.

During interviews, it will be critical for moderators to lead conversations carefully and skillfully around the preset questions to keep the interviews as organized and on-track as possible. Interviewing is a skill, and generally “the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” (Patton, 2015, p. 849) and their skill in guiding conversations with participants. Displaying authenticity, being open and honest, and establishing rapport are all important in an interviewer’s demeanor, especially when the participants will be discussing loaded topics. In addition to these general characteristics, Patton suggests 10 principles to be followed by interviewers: ask open-ended questions; be clear; listen; prone as appropriate; observe; be both empathetic and neutral; make transitions; distinguish types of questions; be prepared for the unexpected; and be present throughout (Patton, 2015, p. 851). Following these principles will not only allow moderators to keep interviews organized and flowing smoothly, but they will also help the participants to better answer questions and know what is expected of them. All will lead to better, more comprehensive data at the end of the interview process.

While some interview questions may arise from analyzing the questionnaire responses, the preset interview questions (see Appendix B) represent the core of what this evaluation will address. These interview questions will serve as a guide to meeting the set evaluation goals; with a qualitative approach, it is critical that participants be given the opportunity to answer questions as they see fit, without the boundaries of preset selections. The interviews will give students and
graduates the opportunity to discuss their motivations surrounding entering and completing their academic programs; their career preparation experiences and activities; for those who experienced them firsthand to outline socialization and professionalization efforts; and for feedback from all participants about recommended programmatic changes and improvements.

Data collected during individual and group interviews will be approached differently, as that collection will be the responsibility of the interview facilitators and the evaluation team. Participants should retain their coded IDs for this portion of the evaluation to protect their privacy in the final report. During interviews, the facilitators will take physical notes of major themes, responses that promote discussion, and any other pertinent information that arises. To get the most complete and accurate information, interviews will also be audio recorded, with the knowledge and consent of participants. Facilitator notes and audio recordings will be uploaded to a secure Box file for the team to review.

There are data collection constraints to consider, chiefly that there may be fewer active participants than is ideal and that participants may not be comfortable providing open and honest responses. Large-scale participation among program students and graduates is essential to collecting the most comprehensive data, so the evaluation team should strive to solicit at least some questionnaire responses from as many participants as possible. Effective communication will be useful in helping with this, as will endorsement from program faculty, academic departments, and/or deans. To get the most thorough and honest responses from participants, the evaluation team and interview facilitators should give clear assurances that participants’ identities will be protected, and that there will be no repercussions stemming from their involvement in the evaluation.
Analysis Plan

Because the evaluation will be undertaken in two parts, data analysis will take place after the questionnaire has been completed and again after the interviews have been conducted. A benefit of using Qualtrics for the questionnaire portion of the evaluation is that the system offers advanced data analysis tools that will be extremely useful to the evaluation team. For text entries, Qualtrics offers a word cloud tool that will allow the team to view the most repeated words found in results from text questions. This visualization displays a cluster of words, with the size of a word indicating how often the word appears in your responses. Word cloud visualizations automatically apply lemmatization to responses, allowing visualization of responses by their key words. The Text iQ tool in Qualtrics allows responses to be assigned to major themes and topics that emerge, and allows for positive, negative, or neutral responses to be noted. This tool has associated widgets that provide visualizations in various formats that will be useful to the team during analysis (Qualtrics, 2022).

The post-questionnaire data analysis can begin even before the first questionnaire responses are received. As a first step, the evaluation team should use the program materials and preliminary data provided by program faculty to begin the process of coding, or assigning descriptive labels that provide relevance or description to words or terms compiled during the evaluation process, (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 79) with provisional coding, in which researchers prepare a list of anticipated codes “based on what preparatory investigation suggests might appear in the data before they are collected and analyzed” (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 83). As analysis moves on to the individual responses, the evaluation team should expect to use descriptive and In Vivo coding as the elemental coding methods. Using descriptive coding will allow the team to summarize major themes to “provide an inventory of topics for indexing and categorizing”
(Miles, et al., 2014, p. 80) which will serve as a foundation for further coding. In Vivo coding will be particularly relevant here, as this method “uses words or short phrases from the participant’s own language in the data record as codes” (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 80); it will be the best method of capturing not only the participants’ exact experiences and perspectives but will also record the terminology specific to academic programs and student groups. Because individual graduate programs have their own cultures and norms, language is particularly relevant to understanding the dynamics of peer and student-faculty interactions.

Emotion coding will also be useful in this evaluation; this method allows evaluators to “explore intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions” and provides “insight into the participants’ perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions” (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 81). Individual perspectives and experiences are at the heart of this evaluation; using emotion coding will allow the evaluation team to filter those down to easily usable codes. Simultaneous coding, “the application of two or more different codes to a single qualitative datum,” and the use of subcodes, “a second-order tag assigned after a primary code to detail or enrich the entry,” (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 85) is to be expected; depending on participant responses, evaluators may find that more depth in coding is possible, leading to a higher likelihood of relevance and use.

Using Qualtrics tools, an automated system, bias is not an immediate concern. However, the evaluation team must be mindful of both the limitations of an automated tool as well as the possibility of injecting pre-existing biases into otherwise clean data. Members of the team can expect to review data Qualtrics is unable to categorize; audit submissions to ensure data has been categorized correctly; and to ensure that all responses are accounted for. In analyzing the responses outside the automated system, the evaluation team must be mindful of bias, either pre-existing or developed during Qualtrics analysis, and strive for unbiased review.
The data analysis process following the interview portion of the evaluation will obviously be different, as the analysis will not be automated in any fashion. However, it is extremely likely that the evaluation team will be able to use the major themes and codes that emerged during the questionnaire portion to guide the analysis of interview data. In coding the interview data, it will be especially important for the team to use In Vivo and emotion codes as thoroughly as possible. It is critical that the data captures participants’ experiences and perceptions using their own terminology, as the verbiage used can provide additional insights that could be erased without using these methods. Using emotion coding will increase the likelihood that the evaluation data will provide insights relevant to the main purpose of this evaluation; in particular, student motivation, influences, perceptions, and experiences. Excluding emotion coding in this process would likely provide data limited to the basics of socialization activities and student experiences, but would eliminate the possibility of understanding how students are affected by those activities and experiences.

In beginning analysis of interview data, which can itself be a monumental undertaking due to sheer volume of data, Patton (2015) suggested first gaining perspective of the whole. In other words, taking inventory of all materials to be analyzed, including facilitator notes, transcripts, audio/video recordings. To get a better sense of the data itself, Patton also offered that transcriptions should be at least partially completed by the evaluator(s), and that field notes should be typed and shared by the interviewer to ensure accuracy. During inventory, evaluators should ensure that notes are correctly labeled and sorted into logical order and identify any obvious gaps that exist; secure backup of all data should also be ensured by this point.

Evaluators should review all compiled materials, including transcripts and recordings, as some nuance may be lost in transcription (Patton 2015). In reviewing and analyzing interview
data, the evaluation team should refer to the codes established after the questionnaire portion of the evaluation; however, attention should be paid to ensuring that new themes and codes are not overlooked or miscategorized. In Vivo and emotion coding should be used stringently here, as verbal responses will give the best examples of perspective, emotions, and terminology used by participants. Maintaining a shared running table of codes will be useful to all members of the team and will ensure uniformity in coding.

Once both questionnaire and interview data are reviewed and coded, the team should revisit the evaluation goals and questions and work to align participant responses accordingly. Patton (2015) asserted that “it is important to review the notes on decisions that were made during the conceptual part of the evaluation” (p. 1045) at this stage to ensure that the data collected and analyzed will be relevant to intended users of the evaluation results, as evaluators should by this point have a firm idea of the questions the data will and will not answer. Revisiting the intended users will serve to refocus the evaluation on the initial questions, and to begin preparing intended users for what the end results may look like (Patton, 2015). Because the questions asked of participants, both in the questionnaire and during interviews, focus on those goals and questions, participant responses should provide valuable answers and insights.

After coding is completed, the evaluators can move on to categorizing, theming, and interpreting the data. Categorizing, or grouping together similar or adjacent codes, is the first step, and will enable the evaluators to identify patterns and relationships more easily between coded data (Leavy, 2017). While identifying these links, the team will also be able to theme the codes or expand on the initial short code with a “sentence that signals the larger meaning behind a code or group of codes” (Leavy, 2017, p. 171). To begin interpretation of the data, evaluators
should keep memos of the categories and themes they find and/or note, to keep a record of “impressions, ideas, and emerging understandings” (Leavy, 2017, p. 171).

In interpreting the data, the evaluators will attempt to make sense of the codes, themes, and categories notated, as they relate to the evaluation questions. During this process, Leavy (2017) strongly recommended looking for patterns and links, seeking out the most salient data, and beginning to consider how the data answers the research questions. Using theory and existing literature will be especially beneficial during interpretation, as both will provide a lens through which to view and make sense of the data (Leavy, 2017).

At the conclusion of data interpretation, the evaluation team may take the opportunity to ensure the data collected, analyzed, and interpreted meet standards for thoroughness, congruence, and validity (Leavy, 2017). In other words, ensuring that data collection and analysis was exhaustive; that there is suitable “fit between the questions, methods, and findings… [and] between data collection and analysis” (Leavy, 2017, p. 173); and that the quality, rigor, and trustworthiness of the evaluation meet strict standards. In doing so, the team will ensure confidence among stakeholders in the resulting data and conclusions and increase the likelihood of their use post-evaluation.

Regarding saturation, the goal will depend almost entirely on the number of participants the evaluation team is able to interview, as well as their candidness during interviews. To reach a saturation point for this evaluation, the team should strive to obtain the most thorough responses possible to each of the interview questions and follow-up questions from each participant in the interview phase. Once the interviewers believe no further responses or information are forthcoming, and especially if there begins to be redundancy in responses, the evaluation team can consider saturation to be reached.
**Stakeholder Engagement Approach**

The stakeholders involved in this evaluation will primarily be individuals within the departments assessed, though there may be others unaffiliated with the cooperating programs. This evaluation will focus on two departments: one department following traditional doctoral socialization and professionalization practices and one Ed.D. program following the CPED methodology and focused on non-traditional socialization. Stakeholders within these departments will be faculty, current students, and recent graduates. Of note will be faculty program coordinators and department chairs in these departments, though the evaluation team should not depend on a high level of involvement from this group. Instead, the team should make every effort to include faculty where possible to account for U-FE guidelines, and ensure programs are kept abreast of the process and findings.

There will also be stakeholders outside of the departments to be assessed, including faculty and students in other departments/programs; Graduate School dean, associate dean, and administrators; Graduate Student Council (GSC) leadership; and wider University leadership, e.g., Provost, Dean of Students, Chancellor.

These stakeholders will have varying levels of interest, power, and commitment to this evaluation, and will be involved at different points and to varying degrees. For example, the Provost has a high level of power, but may have a lower level of interest or commitment during the evaluation process; on the other hand, a current graduate student may have the highest level of interest and commitment, but little to no power. It is critical that different stakeholders be engaged during the evaluation process, though it is preferable that engagement aligns with interest and commitment.
Based on overall interest level, the evaluation team will plan a short series of events with a goal to build engagement in all stakeholders. To meet the requirements of U-FE, the team will ask individuals with high levels of interest to act as an advisory committee that will assist in the development of the initial questionnaire, pilot that questionnaire, and review the analysis of questionnaire data. If there is enough interest, the evaluation team will host a short series of meetings during which the team will facilitate the committee’s activities and record their input and suggestions. For transparency, all stakeholders will be notified of the meetings and invited to attend, participate, or observe as they wish.

The evaluation team will also host at least one informational meeting open to all stakeholders, though the likeliest to attend will be those with higher interest and commitment. The expected attendees will be students and faculty from programs involved in the evaluation; however, for a brief informational meeting, there may be others with higher levels of power who choose to attend, such as members of the Graduate School’s administration. If the evaluation team believes that virtual attendance may be easier for stakeholders and increase involvement, Zoom may be the best format for this meeting.

For all stakeholders, but particularly those with higher levels of power and low levels of interest and commitment, the evaluation team should also prepare regular email communications throughout the evaluation process, beginning with an initial summary explaining the purpose of the evaluation. A regular newsletter explaining the process or dashboard briefing the findings will ensure transparency throughout the evaluation and may garner higher levels of interest in stakeholders (see Communication and Reporting Plan).

Finally, once the evaluation process is complete and the data has been analyzed, the evaluation team will host a reporting meeting open to all stakeholders. At this meeting, the team
will give an overview of the process, summarize the findings, and make recommendations based on the data. All stakeholders will also be given either a virtual or printed copy of the report itself for reference. At this point, the evaluation team should make a concerted effort to involve faculty from cooperating programs to have in-depth conversations about the evaluation data as it relates to their programs. Presuming the resulting data will be strongly tied to student perceptions of learning and student career outcomes, faculty should have interest in participating in meetings to discuss how they can use the data to make programmatic changes to improve student experiences and make their programs more relevant and competitive in today’s market.

**Timeline and Resources**

The evaluation process itself will take place over the course of one full year. Because this is a two-part evaluation, the team will require ample time to plan, design, and implement both phases of the evaluation, as well as adequate time to analyze the data collected after both the questionnaire and interviews. Potentially holding stakeholder meetings prior to the first evaluation phase will also require time to plan and implement, as will preparing regular updates for stakeholders. The evaluation team will also need to be sensitive to the schedules of the participants; many faculty and students will have tight schedules during the nine-month academic year, and some may be totally unavailable during the summer months. Taking all factors into consideration, twelve months is an achievable timeframe.

**Timeline And Tasks**

- Month 1: Assemble the evaluation team - invite interested stakeholders from participating departments to be part of the team that will carry out this evaluation; meet to perform necessary introductions and set a preliminary schedule
• Month 2: Involve stakeholders - begin identifying and reaching out to stakeholders to solicit their interest and participation in the evaluation process; begin planning and implementing short meetings for high interest/commitment stakeholders, if warranted; begin meeting with program coordinators and faculty, if possible, or request assistance from program administrators in gathering program materials and graduate lists

• Month 3: Develop questionnaire - using input from the evaluation team and feedback solicited from meeting participants and faculty (if possible), develop the first phase questionnaire; design the questionnaire using Qualtrics

• Month 4: Pilot - pilot the questionnaire with selected stakeholders; update the questionnaire if necessary, using feedback from pilot participants; test data analysis (both Qualtrics-generated and manual)

• Month 5: Questionnaire - distribute the questionnaire to all participants

• Month 6: Questionnaire data analysis - once the questionnaires have been completed and submitted, analyze the data collected both manually and via Qualtrics; if there is enough interest, host an informational meeting for stakeholders to present data from this phase

• Month 7: Begin second phase - using data collected from the questionnaires, develop additional interview questions as needed; review questionnaire submissions for likely interview participants; put out a general call for interview participant volunteers

• Month 8: Interview preparation - schedule group and individual interviews; identify and collect (or reserve) materials and resources for interviews; identify and train interview facilitators

• Month 9: Interviews - begin conducting individual and group interviews; some rescheduling may be necessary; collect data as interviews are completed
• Month 10: Interviews - conduct final interviews; continue collecting data as interviews are completed; begin collating data

• Month 11: Analysis - analyze all data collected during interviews; categorize using set system; determine recommendations; begin preparing report; prepare data infographics and other visual aids for reporting

• Month 12: Reporting - finalize report; begin meeting with program coordinators and faculty to discuss results; plan a reporting meeting for all stakeholders; prepare digital or printed copies of final report; host meeting to present final report to stakeholders

**Resources and Materials**

The questionnaire for the first phase will be developed fully online using University-sponsored Qualtrics accounts, which will also allow the completed questionnaires to be disseminated fully online, and for the responses to be evaluated the same way. As each team member should already have a computer (either work or personal), no additional resources will be required for the questionnaire phase.

The interview phase will require some materials, though these should not be a burden. If the team chooses to provide participants with printed materials (e.g., program sheets of the programs involved, an overview of the socialization efforts outlined by faculty, and/or an overview of the career outcomes reported by graduates), print copies will need to be made of each; this can be done by a member of the team if resources are available, or by University Printing. Alternatively, the evaluation team may choose to present these materials digitally if the interview spaces allow. Participants in group interviews will be offered notepads and pens/pencils. Facilitators will need to be provided with the questions, either digital or print, as
well as a notepad and pen/pencil or a laptop/tablet. Participants in group interviews will also be provided with light refreshments, such as bottled water and prepackaged snacks.

The use of university spaces will be required throughout the evaluation process; there are currently spaces available for reservation at the main Oxford campus, the South Oxford Campus, and the Jackson Avenue Center. The team will need a space to meet regularly; it should be large enough to accommodate the entire team, when necessary, and have technology available. A large meeting space will also be needed to host the workshops and informational meetings the team will host; ideally, the same space will be used for each meeting, though ongoing space constraints will likely mean multiple spaces will be used. Technology will be necessary for these meeting spaces. Light refreshments will also be provided during these sessions.

Large rooms will be needed for group interviews; they should have chairs and preferably tables. Technology in these rooms would be ideal but is not strictly necessary. Individual office spaces may be used for individual interviews, particularly with faculty. However, if the participant prefers a neutral space, one will need to be arranged. This could be a smaller space and would not need technology.

The evaluation team will need to decide, with input from stakeholders, whether the final report should be digital or print. Both will likely require the services of Marketing and Communications for design. As print copies will add a significant additional cost, it may be appropriate to prepare a small number of print copies for high power stakeholders, then distribute digital copies widely.

Communication and Reporting Plan

Communication
It is critical that the evaluation team plan for ample communication to stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, from the very beginning steps. Because stakeholders will have varying levels of interest in and commitment to the process, varying types and levels of communication will also be necessary. However, the constant should be open communication and transparency to gain interest, support, and trust in the data. A constraint with communication will likely be lack of interest during the process; the evaluation team will need to strive to communicate most effectively and regularly with stakeholders who show interest in the process.

The evaluation team should approach communication with goals to provide transparency throughout the process; to inform stakeholders of potential issues within graduate education; and to garner interest in and support for both the evaluation as well as any programmatic changes that might be recommended after data analysis. Involving program faculty as stakeholders and keeping them informed from the beginning of the process may also help to reduce opposition to any recommended programmatic changes. It is also important that students in the programs involved in the evaluation feel as though they are included in and informed of the evaluation activities, as the evaluation data will ultimately affect them the most.

On the evaluation team there should be one or two persons who are responsible for communicating with stakeholders; this would include regular newsletter, blog, or website updates; coordination of informational meetings and workshops; and the reporting meeting (Leavy, 2017). They would also need to be the point of contact for any questions or concerns from stakeholders or others. This person(s) would need to be sure to allocate enough time to dedicate to communications and would need to ensure that tasks are completed in a timely manner. If other team members have time and are willing, their help with communication would ease any potential burden.
Informational Meeting.

The evaluation team will plan an informational meeting at the beginning of the evaluation process to give stakeholders an overview of the evaluation purpose and plan. All stakeholders will be welcome, though the team should expect only those with high interest in the evaluation to participate. Though these participants may have less power, their participation and input are valuable. It may be prudent to hold this meeting via Zoom to accommodate those who wish to participate.

Information Gathering Meetings.

Members of the evaluation team will make efforts to meet with program coordinators and faculty in one-on-one and group meetings, as desired. During these meetings, the evaluation team will ask for degree plans, program sheets, and syllabi for their departments’ programs. Faculty will also be asked to provide any post-graduate career information about students they feel comfortable sharing; faculty may wish to provide this information using coded student/graduate information.

Newsletter/Blog/Website.

The team member(s) assigned to communication should choose to either send a monthly newsletter to all stakeholders with updates about the process and findings, or to maintain a blog and/or website that gives an overview of progress and data. A benefit of the newsletter is that the team could include narratives, provide general updates, and solicit feedback; however, many stakeholders may not wish to receive newsletters via email, or may simply ignore them. A benefit of the blog/website is that the evaluation team would be able to include infographics and charts that many stakeholders may find visually appealing; however, less narrative information would be included, and only high interest level stakeholders would be likely to view the
information. Both methods have value, regardless of the drawbacks, so the ultimate decision would be up to the team and may change based on feedback during the process.

**Working Meetings.**

High interest stakeholders will be invited to participate in working meetings prior to the questionnaire phase of the evaluation and prior to the interview phase of the evaluation. Their input will be valuable in developing the questionnaire, as well as in piloting the instrument. Presenting questionnaire data to this group may also lead to unique insights and ideas that the evaluation team may not have considered and involving them prior to interviews will help the team ensure that the most pertinent questions are asked of interview participants.

**Reporting**

**Report.**

The evaluation team should strive to ensure that the report itself is comprehensive and visually appealing, including both text and graphics where appropriate. Direct quotes from participants, using coded IDs, may be impactful, so should be included where possible. The report should be readable, direct and to the point, and use as non-technical a writing style as possible to be suitable for all audiences. It will be important to achieve a balance between raw information and evaluator interpretations; Patton (2015) provided the guidance that “sufficient description and direct quotations should be included to allow the reader to enter into the situation observed and the thoughts of the people represented in the report…[but] should stop short… of becoming trivial and mundane” (p. 1204). Essentially, that description should give the reader a sense of understanding, but interpretation should take over before the reader loses interest. Patton (2015) also suggested the use of metaphors and analogies to guide the reader, though cautioned that context must be clear to avoid potential offense to any audience.
Patton (2015) and Miles et al. (2014) encouraged the use of appropriate visual aids in reporting. Visualizations of data and interpretations can give readers overviews of the evaluation outcomes and can bypass any time or attention span issues that may prevent stakeholders from taking in large amounts of written information (Patton, 2015). While Patton advocated for photos, illustrations, and various types of visual maps, Miles et al. (2014) recommended matrices and network displays, including tables and text charts. Used judiciously, any combination of visual aids could enhance a report. Miles et al. (2014) also noted the use of text formatting to differentiate written data: using seriation; blocks of text of varying lengths; different font faces; and spacing or lines will make the text itself more visually appealing without the use of visual aids where they may not be appropriate.

To appeal to stakeholders with different levels of commitment, the team may choose to prepare multiple versions of the report. For example, an executive summary or aide memoire may be the best option to present to the Graduate School dean, Provost, Dean of Students, and Chancellor. On the other hand, a full final report should be of most use to program coordinators and faculty who would be responsible for implementing programmatic changes. Students and recent graduates may have mixed preferences, or the team might choose to prepare a different, perhaps more graphics-based or dynamic version for this group.

**Program Coordinator/Faculty Meetings.**

The evaluation team should strive to schedule individual and/or group interviews with program coordinators and faculty to provide them with a higher-level, non-course-specific overview of the questionnaire and interview data. These meetings should focus on student responses regarding their experiences with and perceptions of the socialization efforts they experienced in their academic programs, as well as how those experiences and perceptions have
impacted them professionally. In best case scenarios, program coordinators and faculty will be willing to open a dialogue with the evaluation team about programmatic changes and improvements based on the collected data, both in response to student experiences and to the changing higher education landscape. In less-than-ideal circumstances, program coordinators and faculty will be willing to listen to the results only. All should be given copies of the final report; perhaps this is one report that can be formatted specifically for this group.

**Final Meeting.**

All stakeholders will be invited to a final or reporting meeting at which the team will give an overview of the evaluation purpose and process, present data, and make recommendations based on the findings. This meeting, like the report itself, will be concise, with the data and recommendations presented without bias. The team will include a visual presentation, with images and graphics pulled from the reports.

To accommodate the schedules of more high-power stakeholders, the team will make this meeting available virtually, and will record the full meeting to make available along with meeting minutes.
Conclusion

In order to explore perspectives of graduate student socialization to practitioner careers in students’ fields of study, it is necessary to conduct a qualitative evaluation of both traditional Ph.D. and practitioner-focused Ed.D. programs. The evaluation will take place in two phases: a questionnaire followed by interviews and focus groups in which the evaluation team will seek to understand student experiences surrounding socialization and career choice, in the participants’ own words. A qualitative evaluation, guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework, will yield the data most relevant to answering the aforementioned evaluation questions.

During data collection, coding, analysis, and interpretation, the evaluators will strive for thorough and unbiased evaluation; stringent standards of congruence and validity will be ensured to build confidence among stakeholders in the data and subsequent recommendations. The use of Qualtrics in the beginning phase of the evaluation will allow the evaluators to begin with unbiased coding, which should set the standard for moving forward.

Upon completion of data analysis and interpretation, the evaluation team will prepare and present reports and recommendations to stakeholders in multiple formats. To ensure the use of the data post-evaluation, the team will maintain close contact with high-interest stakeholders throughout and after the evaluation process.

In Manuscript 3, I will draw on leadership theories, my conceptual framework, and additional literature to discuss recommendations and a leadership plan as they relate to the PoP and in the context of CPED’s Working Principles. I will also discuss and answer the question “How will you continue to enhance your knowledge and skills as a leader and scholar?”
References


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Manuscript 3: Practice Improvement Recommendations & Leadership Statement
ABSTRACT

Anticipating the results of the evaluation laid out in the first two manuscripts of this dissertation in practice is not strictly necessary for making recommendations for interventions to the professional socialization process predominate in doctoral education. Nor is hard data necessary for outlining an approach to leadership that will facilitate equity, problem-solving, and positive change in doctoral education in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate. Regardless of data, an argument can be made that changes to the socialization and professionalization processes inherent in doctoral education are needed to meet the changing needs of modern students and the contemporary career market.

Exploring doctoral education to facilitate appropriate, career-focused socialization necessitates changes on multiple levels, including transparency in socialization efforts; intentional formal socialization integrated within the curricula; opportunities for informal socialization and career exploration; advising removed from academic departments; and dedicated career services for all graduate students. This wholesale approach represents the kind of change and innovation necessary to modernize doctoral education and provide the kind of career-focused education contemporary students are seeking.

In carrying out this evaluation and in leading implementation of recommended changes, it will be necessary to embody a leadership style that encourages cooperation, integrity, situational functionality, and adaptability. A multidimensional combination of leadership approaches and styles can be assembled to create a framework of leadership that will be most
appropriate to meeting each of these goals. Combining elements of multiple leadership theories allows for flexibility that such a large-scale undertaking requires.
Guiding Problem and Questions

The purpose of planning this evaluation is to explore perspectives of graduate student socialization to practitioner careers in students’ fields of study. The goals of this evaluation are: 1) to determine the extent to which students feel confident in their career preparation during their programs and post-graduation; 2) to gain insight into how graduate programs prepare students for careers, particularly those outside the faculty, and; 3) to find areas in which programmatic changes could be made to benefit students’ career outcomes.

The questions for this evaluation are:

1. In what ways are instructors implementing career-focused socialization activities - formal and/or informal - within doctoral programs?

2. Within these socialization efforts, in what ways are students given opportunities to explore non-faculty career preparation and advancement?

3. How are students being socialized for careers outside academia, and in what ways does this differ from how students are being socialized for careers in academia?

4. How prepared do students feel for their chosen careers upon graduation?

5. How are graduates’ careers affected by socialization, or lack thereof, during their graduate programs?

These questions address the heart of the evaluation goals and align well with the overall purpose of the evaluation. Answering these questions will provide the insight necessary to recommend any needed programmatic changes.
Statement of the Problem of Practice

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) has determined that the problem of practice (PoP) for a dissertation in practice (DiP) should be “situated in their workplace setting, one that they wanted to improve or resolve,” (Buss, 2018, p. 41) and that candidates should “frame problems in situ” (Storey & Maughan, 2015, p. 14). In developing a PoP, Storey and Maughan (2015) suggested a four-stage process in which candidates determine if a PoP is authentic, relevant, and deserves scholarly inquiry; if so, candidates should then “articulate the PoP in meaningful and direct language” (p. 15).

In determining authenticity, self-reflection including consideration of limitations and biases is encouraged. In the following Reflection on Positionality, I describe the experience that led to identifying this PoP, and my own biases in beginning the associated research. My observations of doctoral programs, followed by the time now spent on my own doctoral studies, have given me insight into the problem as it occurs in real time.

Establishing the need for a solution follows as we determine relevance. The current situation regarding doctoral socialization is, at best, unclear; at worst, many doctoral graduates are leaving their programs of study unprepared for the realities of their chosen professions. The ideal situation for all doctoral programs, both Ph.D. and Ed.D., is one in which students are aware before entering programs of the socialization goals and efforts led by affiliated faculty. To bridge the gap between the ideal and the actual, a reasonable and actionable solution is needed.

In terms of researchability, framing this problem through a lens of socialization and the CPED framework will provide an abundance of resources that can guide the development of a relevant evaluation. Additionally, there exists broader research on graduate career choice, and the influences that affect such, as well as associated research about faculty perceptions of their
own roles in this process. Bringing all relevant research together will provide a solid foundation on which to build an evaluation and recommend necessary changes to doctoral socialization.

Finally, in articulating the problem: This evaluation will examine the influence, if any, of socialization in doctoral programs as it concerns students who intend to pursue practitioner-based careers, and will provide insight into the gaps, if any exist, in student socialization. Further, it will allow program coordinators and faculty to develop and implement programmatic changes in order to better meet students’ changing needs.
Conceptual Framework

“Conceptual frameworks are used in research for outlining possible options or for presenting the preferred approach, namely defining the problem and purpose, conducting a literature review, devising a methodology, data collection and final analysis” (Suman, 2014, p. 95). This conceptual framework has four elements, which are: the body of literature on graduate student socialization; the literature in relation to the influences on graduate students during their time in their doctoral programs; the literature concerning career choice among doctoral students; and how the framework outlined by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) influences practitioner-student success.

Graduate Student Socialization

Socialization among graduate students has been increasingly studied in recent years, along with the disparate effects differing types and levels of socialization have on students during their academic careers. Socialization is linked to student development and success, sense of belonging, and satisfaction with program of choice. It stands to reason that socialization is also a factor influencing student careers post-graduation, and that differing levels of socialization may lead to disparate levels of post-graduate student success in either practitioner or academic careers. John C. Weidman, Darla J. Twale, and Elizabeth L. Stein have developed a framework of graduate student socialization which has established:

that socialization into the professions is conceived as a series of processes whereby the novice: 1) enters the educational institution with values, beliefs, and attitudes about self and professional practices; 2) is exposed to various socializing influences while in school, including normative pressures exerted by faculty and peers, from society, professional organizations, professional practice, and non-educational reference groups; 3) assesses
the salience of the various normative pressures for attaining personal and professional goals, and 4) assumes, changes, or maintains those values, aspirations, identity and personal goals that were held at the onset of the socializing experience (Stein & Weidman, 1989, p. 14).

Their framework will be useful to this study as a way to interpret how the overall socialization process during students’ time in their graduate programs affects their professional outcomes.

Others have contributed significantly to the body of literature on graduate student socialization, as well. Much of the research outside the Weidman-Twale-Stein model focuses on faculty perspectives (e.g., Gardner, 2010b; Hermanowicz, 2016; Lechuga, 2011), underrepresented graduate student groups (e.g., Gardner, 2008), and disparities in academic environments (e.g., Liddell, et al., 2014; O’Meara, et al., 2014). Through her 2008 study of non-traditional doctoral students, Gardner found that high attrition rates in doctoral programs could be directly related to a failure in socialization, or a lack of students “fitting the mold” of their graduate programs. Gardner posited this failure is due to traditional socialization models having been almost exclusively focused on the historically homogenous doctoral student population - white males in their early 20s - and have not accounted for the diverse, non-normative experiences of those outside that population.

Of particular interest to this study are the implications of faculty perspectives of their roles in the socialization process, and how that can affect development of professional identity in students and their career outcomes. Because doctoral programs serve as the introduction to, and training for, students’ professional careers, both formal and informal socialization are critical to student development and success in graduate programs. Faculty are responsible for most of the
socialization during students’ time in their programs, both directly via active socialization and indirectly through the culture present in academic departments.

**Influences on Graduate Students**

Graduate students, specifically those in doctoral programs, are influenced heavily by their advisors, faculty, and peers. In some ways, doctoral students are often socialized to adapt their own thinking and pursuits to the interests and research endeavors of their program faculty. Faculty mentors and advisors, specifically, have a large sphere of influence over students; it is perhaps inevitable, then, that faculty mentors are able to leverage that influence to best suit their own interests, or the interests of their departments. This study is specifically interested in the level of influence programs and faculty have over doctoral students, and how that influence is used as it pertains to post-doctoral careers.

Student agency is critical in ensuring that the homogeneity that has, in the past, existed in doctoral programs does not continue, and that students are not coerced into traditional academic paths based on the preferences and beliefs of program faculty. The relationship between faculty members, particularly advisors and mentors, and students is greatly unequal and vulnerable to coercion; the larger academic environment of a department also plays a role in either increasing or decreasing student agency. How student agency is affected will be a significant indicator of the influence and socialization - or lack thereof - students experience. O’Meara, et. al. presented a model of influence which is focused on graduate student agency and the ways in which graduate departments influence career advancement. Their findings outline five ways in which departments enable or influence graduate student agency in career advancement (O'Meara, et al., 2014) which will provide a useful framework for categorizing the different types and levels of influence students experience during their time in their graduate programs.
Graduate Student Career Choice

Post-graduate career choice among doctoral students is a relatively new topic. Until recently, doctoral programs prepared students to enter the faculty profession; the emergence of specialized doctoral programs that give students the opportunity to continue in their career fields has placed a burden of choice on students that did not previously exist. However, with the number of full-time, tenured faculty roles slowly declining, it is a choice with which more doctoral students than ever are faced. The literature on graduate student career choice specifically focuses on faculty involvement, student career services, and opportunities for hands-on learning while in the program. Of particular interest are the ways in which the Weidman-Twale-Stein model of socialization “does not address necessarily the career needs of graduate and professional students” and “could benefit from services designed to help them identify and explore their career interests” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006).

Given the current climate surrounding careers in academia, it is especially important that students receive the opportunity and guidance necessary to explore career options outside the faculty. Exposure to multiple career paths is critical to students during their time in doctoral programs, and greatly impacts both student agency and post-graduate career success. However, research (e.g., Hall & Burns, 2009; Lechuga, 2014; O’Meara, et al., 2014) suggests that, as with socialization, faculty knowledge and involvement is key to socializing students to alternate career paths, and many academic departments simply do not have faculty who are able or willing to advocate for alternate careers.

This study is interested in how all elements of career choice among doctoral students affect the ultimate decision of whether to enter the full-time faculty or to seek a career outside of
academe, on the assumption that some students do not enter doctoral programs with solid career aspirations.

**CPED Framework**

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate is the only established, national body that is addressing the change of direction being undertaken by many doctoral students, as well as the shift higher education, in general, is making in terms of faculty and tenure. The CPED Framework has been developed specifically to encourage schools of education to design doctoral programs focused on “quality, rigorous practitioner preparation” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b), rather than extending the traditional focus on preparation of future faculty. Though the CPED Framework consists of three separate components, one will be of most use to this study: Design Concepts on which to Build Programs. Of particular interest to this study are three elements therein: Scholarly Practitioner; Signature Pedagogy; and Mentoring and Advising (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). Each of these concepts is aimed at producing doctoral graduates who are capable of practice at high levels, and whose careers will benefit from practitioner-focused programming. As the Framework is currently in practice in over 100 institutions, there should be abundant sample data.

The CPED Framework, while a bold step in a new direction of doctoral education, is not without its detractors. As outlined by Perry, Zambo, and Abruzzo (Perry et al., 2020), there are inherent challenges associated with designing or redesigning doctoral programs to follow the guidelines laid forth by CPED. Of particular concern are the resistance by faculty to the process itself, along with the challenges inherent to building programs around an evolving and emerging concept. There is also some data to suggest that, in many academic programs, there is too little distinction between traditional Ph.D. and the Ed.D. programs, leading some to believe that the
Ed.D. should be eliminated altogether. While these challenges do not invalidate the Framework itself, they certainly give room for thought and discussion.

**Markers of Socialization**

In order to recognize and evaluate the efficacy of socialization activities within academic programs, and to discuss perceptions of socialization with multiple audiences, markers - or indicators - of socialization must first be identified and outlined. Appropriate socialization of graduate students is a particularly complex idea, in which the actual and the ideal are not always well aligned. As in other areas of life, during graduate programs “individuals are socialized to various careers through experiences and communication with others” (Powers & Meyers, 2016, p. 410). In this context, those experiences will be the formal and informal socialization activities geared toward students during their time in an academic program, and the relevant communication will be with instructors and faculty mentors, as well as peers. However, it can be difficult to determine if the existing experiences and communications are preparing students for careers within, much less outside, academe. Helm et al. (2012) found that modern competency areas such as diversity, learning outcomes, technology, and entrepreneurship are simply not part of the professionalization structure of doctoral programs, even though these professional knowledge areas have become a requirement for graduates anticipating entering the faculty (p. 6). Austin (2002) claimed that part of the reason for this lies in a typical university and program structure which “serves as much to make the institutions work effectively as to prepare graduate students for future professional roles” (p. 95). She further claimed that the research missions present at most colleges and universities are greatly supported by the work of graduate students who serve as research and teaching assistants for faculty. Markers of adequate socialization in
graduate students are therefore typically secondary to the overall mission of the departments and the larger university system and are often overlooked in the interests of the larger mission.

While Austin’s focus is on how such systems provide inadequate preparation for graduates entering the faculty, her research also supports a lack of career socialization for students entering other career fields, a growing circumstance which she acknowledges by stating upfront that “many PhDs will work outside of academe instead of becoming professors” (p. 95). In what can be construed as realistic advice for doctoral students, Austin suggested that “those who aspire to be faculty members should learn about the job options outside academe given the limits to employment opportunities within the academy,” (p. 101) though her research does not delve into the applicability of present socialization models to those who choose, or are forced into, careers outside academia. However, she included a statement from Leroy Hood, then president and director of the Institute for Systems Biology, who, at a conference focused on Ph.D. realignment, argued that:

> the changing world of employment for PhDs, an employment world that necessarily includes positions outside academe as well as in it, requires graduates to develop a philosophy about scholarship, education, and leadership; accommodate diversity; and understand how to continue to learn and adapt to changing situations. (Leroy Hood, 2000, as cited in Austin, 2002)

It is worth noting that the socialization markers Hood highlighted in his presentation align almost exactly with the later-developed framework of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), particularly the design concepts of Scholarly Practitioner, Signature Pedagogy, and Mentoring and Advising (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). Though the CPED Framework focuses specifically on the Ed.D., it appears that Hood was recommending a
realignment of the Ph.D. that would follow the same or similar concepts as a response to the changing landscape of higher education. In this case, the same or similar CPED-aligned socialization markers could realistically be used for both Ph.D. and Ed.D. students.

Realignment of socialization goals in graduate programs is not a new concept, nor are Hood’s recommendations far-fetched. Indeed, as graduate students’ career outlooks have changed, so too have some approaches to adequate professional socialization, even at the theoretical level. During the data analysis portion of their study on socialization within tourism and hospitality education, Sonnenschein et al. (2018) contributed to a revised version of Weidman, Twale, and Stein’s (2001) “Conceptualizing Graduate and Professional Student Socialization” (Figure 1, see Appendix A), which Sonnenschein et al. (p. 1292) have titled “Higher Education Students’ Professional Socialization” (Figure 2, see Appendix A). In developing the initial framework, Weidman et al. argued that, in order “to understand professional socialization, the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of students’ experience in universities must be taken into account” (Weidman et al., as cited in Sonnenschein et al., 2018, p. 1289). To this end, the graduate program - including university and department culture and existing socialization process - form the core of the original model. The four ellipses surrounding the core of this model are intended to represent the factors outside a university community that impact student professional socialization and include Professional Communities and Novice Professional Practitioners (Weidman et al., 2001). While Weidman et al. intended for the outlying elements to play integral roles in student socialization and professionalization, those elements remain external to graduate programs themselves; within this framework, there is no imperative for specific program-based professional socialization.
Sonnenschein et al. addressed this in their revised framework, which also provides some markers of appropriate socialization for professional careers. The core of this revised framework is titled “Higher education socialization processes and career development,” and emphasized the need for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Interactions with specific populations as integral components of professional socialization (Sonnenschein et al., 2018). These are significant deviations from the original framework, and provide a more modern, practitioner-based approach to socialization. Sonnenschein et al. have placed WIL as a core component of professional socialization, whereas Weidman et al. relegated Employers to an outer ring of their framework and considered the majority of professionalization to be “not under control of the academic program area” (Weidman et al., as cited in Sonnenschein et al., 2018, p. 1293), though possibly impactful of the overall graduate experience. Sonnenschein et al. found in their study that most of their respondents “recommended the introduction of an internship program embedded in the degree, which would allow the students to develop relevant attributes for their future career and give them a competitive advantage in recruitment” and “enable students to have realistic expectations of their future professional positions” (p. 1293). There is also a specific focus on Interactions within the core of the revised framework; Sonnenschein et al. included among these recommended interactions academics, students, graduates, and managers, though it is easy to see how this group could be expanded or retracted as needed to fit the specific needs of an academic program. Their study affirmed that it can be “advantageous for students’ socialization into a career in the industry that more networking with academics, peers and graduates is developed” and that relationship-building within a professional community could lead to the development of realistic professional expectations and outlooks (p. 1293).
This revised framework also included ellipses with external elements, including Industry Sector and Graduates, which would be largely outside the control or oversight of an academic program (Sonnenschein et al., 2018). However, the bulk of recommended professional socialization existed in the framework’s core, and within the graduate program itself. The elements contained within this framework provide excellent markers which can be identified as present or missing in graduate programs; they are specific enough to provide benchmarks, but universal enough to fit the needs of various graduate programs.

Doctoral realignment was also the purpose of a 2000 study and conference titled "Re-envisioning the Ph.D. to meet the needs of the 21st Century," at which participants worked to create a set of recommendations for how doctoral education should evolve to meet the changing needs of doctoral graduates and society at large (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000b). In an amalgamation of concerns from multiple sources, one student concern relevant to professionalization stands out:

What counts as professional preparation is too narrowly defined. Students pursue doctorates for a variety of reasons: for the love of the subject-matter, to do research, to teach, to obtain the credential to work at a certain level in industry or secondary education administration, or to figure it out along the way. These reasons are usually much more varied than the career paths their departmental cultures or professors are equipped to help them achieve. Doctoral students reported wanting more concrete exposure to varied options and multiple contexts in which to apply their hard-won knowledge and skills. (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000a, p. 13)

Results from the study and conference that followed “revealed several skills that are important to careers outside of academia for Ph.D. graduates. For example, research, leadership,
communication, administrative, interpersonal skills, and technology skills were listed as skills that employers seek from Ph.D. graduates” (Nyquist & Wulff, 2000, as cited in Helm et al., 2012). So, in order to find evidence of more broadly defined professional socialization, perhaps looking for evidence of the aforementioned skills sought by prospective employers would give the most insight.

Earlier studies of both undergraduate and graduate students can provide more basic insights into socialization markers, though they can be differently termed. Tinto (2012), in particular, used the terms “social integration,” “academic integration,” and “persistence” (p. 232) to describe the markers recently referred to as relating to socialization. Tinto used academic integration here as shorthand for the various academic factors that play roles in student success and persistence, e.g., “academic performance, level of intellectual development, and perception of having a positive experience in academic settings” (Lakhal, et al., 2020, p. 4). In correlation with academic integration, Tinto (1975) characterized “social integration” as students’ interactions with peers and participation in the social environment of a campus (p. 92). While these two integrations can play a role in persistence, Tinto argued that they are separate, and that they are not both strictly required for student success, claiming that “a person may be able to achieve integration in one area without doing so in the other” (p. 92), with possible negative outcomes associated with integration in just one area. Academic integration, though, is critical to future professional success, “because of the direct relationship between a person's participation in the academic domain of the college and his future occupational attainment (e.g., as reflected in academic attainments and occupational role socialization)” (Spady, 1970, p.78, as cited in Tinto, 1975, p. 92). Knowing this, a possible marker for sufficient socialization could be as simple as students’ grades in program courses. However, before using grades as a benchmark, it would be
wise to consider the alignment, or lack thereof, of the coursework with professional norms and desired aptitudes.

In characterizing “persistence,” Tinto (2012) described it as being “shaped by the personal and intellectual interactions that occur within and between students and faculty and the various communities that make up the academic and social systems of the institution” (p. 231), which strongly mirrors Weidman et al.’s 2001 framework of student socialization. Tinto (2012) also included as part of his theory on graduate persistence the reality that

the primary reference groups for doctoral students, as opposed to undergraduates generally, are the more local student and faculty communities that reside in the schools, programs, and departments that house the specific fields of study in which the doctoral degree is pursued. (pps. 231-232)

Because of this, Tinto concluded that the process and outcomes of persistence would rely on the structures and norms of individual departments, themselves, and that both of those variables are subject to periodic change. Following this line of reasoning, it would make sense to assume that, while some commonality will exist across all graduate programs, some of the markers of socialization will be both program- and time-specific. Indeed, according to Tinto (2012, p. 232), many differences in socialization may exist even within an academic department as a result of the varying norms and socialization efforts among program faculty. Going further, if one considers the inherent differences between the Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs, there will also certainly be different markers of socialization that exist in students of those degrees, even within the same department. Knowing this, it would perhaps be most objective and equitable to base at least some socialization markers on the norms and standards of degrees within academic departments at the time of evaluation.
In his description of graduate persistence, Tinto also included an element of professionalization, which he recognized as being reflective of the norms of local and external reference groups, as well as an anticipatory entry to students’ chosen professions (2012, p. 233). To this point, Tinto observed that, as they anticipate entry to a professional field, students “are likely to orient themselves toward the norms that they perceive as determining success in that field of work” (2012, p. 233). In most graduate programs, students’ primary, if not sole, orientation to the norms of anticipated career fields is the “local community” (Tinto, 2012), or academic program and/or department of which they are members. As Tinto concluded, the success of that strategy is entirely dependent on the congruence of the norms displayed within local communities and the norms of external, or professional, communities sought by students (2012, p. 234). Markers of professional socialization in this case, then, would include an evaluation of professional norms and students’ exposure to them during their academic careers. Included would be the presence or absence of professionalization efforts sponsored by, but external to, an academic department (i.e., socialization in the external community).

In their study on academic and social integration in a specific set of blended synchronous courses (BSC), Lakhal, et al. (2020) found “Appropriateness of pedagogical strategies” (p. 8) as one of the main themes emerging from their interview process, with one relevant sub-theme, “1) course content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies” (p. 8). In this sub-theme, Lakhal et al. learned that, for students in these courses, practical instruction was ultimately more beneficial than a more theoretical approach. These particular BSC courses are designed for classroom teachers to improve their practice; in the courses, many of the instructors “give concrete examples based on their own teaching experience” (p. 8) and shared their own professional strategies and experiences. The usefulness of this practitioner approach was noted by both
students and fellow instructors who found that it not only helped them improve their own practice, but also impacted student persistence (p. 9).

In the second main theme that emerged from this study, the sub-theme “Instructors’ and teaching assistants’ attitude” (p. 10) is applicable here, given the aforementioned emphasis on academic integration. This study revealed that “having instructors with significant experience and a clear vision of the objectives to be achieved in the course helps to ensure course quality” (p. 10), and that instructors’ “attitude, openness, enthusiasm and support play an important role in students’ academic and social integration” (p. 11). Lakhal et al.’s study focused on a very specific set of coursework targeted at a narrow audience; however, the approach of these courses was practitioner-oriented, practitioner-taught, and student-centered. Following their model, then, would allow markers of professional socialization to exist within academic courses, programs, and faculty, rather than with the students alone.

Considering all of this, desired socialization markers in academic programs and graduating students could be:

- Grades and/or GPA
- Leadership
- Accommodation of diversity
- Adaptability
- Work-Integrated Learning experiences
- Interpersonal skills
- Interactions with professionals in both local and external communities
- Realistic professional expectations
- Practitioner-based coursework
Because, as Tinto pointed out, socialization will differ even within academic departments, it is critical that each program be individually evaluated prior to evidence of these markers being sought. Such an evaluation of programs should include questions pertaining to:

- Integration of academic curricula with desired professional aptitudes, norms, and skills
- Work-Integrated Learning opportunities
- Formalized opportunities for internal professional socialization
- Formalized opportunities for external professional socialization
- Recent and relevant practitioner experience of instructors

It is assured that such an evaluation of programs will uncover both different opportunities and different eventual markers and outcomes for students. However, having this baseline will allow for the integration of some updated norms in the broader scope of graduate education.
Practice Improvement Plan

Research has shown that the current professional socialization model existent within many doctoral programs is, at best, underserving contemporary students (Gardner, 2008; Helm et al.; Laursen et al., 2012; Lehker & Furlong, 2006; Weidman et al., 2001). Though data from the proposed evaluation is not yet available, it is possible to anticipate that the results would align with current research, suggesting that students may not be adequately prepared for professional careers at the culmination of their doctoral studies. Shortfalls in socialization exist in program alignment and standards (O’Meara, et al., 2014; Weidman, et al., 2001); advising and mentoring (Gardner, 2010b; Hall & Burns, 2009; Hermanowicz, 2016; Laursen et al., 2012); and career services and exploration opportunities (Helm et al.; Lehker & Furlong, 2006; O'Meara, et al., 2014). Because the issue itself is multifaceted, an integrated multi-pronged approach is necessary to best address each area of deficiency. Following are recommended interventions and/or changes to doctoral programs for each of these areas.

Program Alignment

No two doctoral programs are the same; even within a single institution, programs may operate so differently as to be unrecognizable to one another (Weidman, et al., 2001). This is to say nothing of the differences between institutions, themselves, even when considering programs falling under the same academic discipline. Lacking familiarity with the department and faculty, it is, therefore, nearly impossible for prospective students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the standards - norms and expectations - within an academic department. Perhaps more importantly, it is difficult for prospective students to determine the socialization efforts and goals of a department’s faculty prior to beginning a program. This is problematic on two related fronts: first, if students are unable to determine the norms, expectations, and socialization goals of an
academic program, they cannot be assured that the program will adequately prepare them for their anticipated careers; second, being unable to determine the academic and career-related atmosphere of a program increases the likelihood of students entering programs to which they are ill-suited.

Gardner explored the consequences of students failing to “fit the mold” of their graduate programs in her 2008 study concerning graduate student socialization and found that “women, students of color, students with families, part-time students, and older students” (p. 125) are particularly susceptible to unknowingly entering academic programs in which socialization efforts are inadequate or are simply not geared toward diverse students. While these populations are certainly not the only ones affected, Gardner’s study concluded that inadequate socialization in graduate programs does affect them at disproportionate rates, suggesting that traditional socialization efforts are not serving a modern graduate student population. The main consequence of poor socialization in academic programs, she found, is attrition - which can be extremely costly for colleges and universities, and detrimental to students. In 2004, a ten percent decrease in graduate student attrition would have saved the University of Notre Dame “$1 million per year in stipends alone,” (Smallwood, 204 as cited in Gardner, 2008, p. 126) a figure that translates to over $1.6 million today. Considering that Lovitts (2001) estimated graduate attrition has remained at a steady 50 percent for the past 60 years, large universities may be losing $8 million or more per year on stipends alone; this estimate does not account for related expenses such as recruitment, administrative time and expense, and the cost associated with faculty’s time and efforts, which potentially add millions of dollars to this estimate. While the amount of money an institution could save by reducing graduate attrition will vary depending on several factors, all institutions should strive to be as responsible as possible with the funds
available to them and should pursue all avenues available to increase their budgetary effectiveness.

Budgetary concerns aside, there is also the negative effect on students to consider, as they are affected more directly by attrition than institutions. Lovitts (2001) summarized the effect of attrition on graduate students as something that “can ruin individuals’ lives,” (p. 6) and certainly changes the trajectory of many individuals’ futures. For students without assistantships and stipends to fund their graduate education, there is also the financial burden to consider in connection with attrition rates; not only can financial issues lead, directly or indirectly, to attrition, but non-completing students may also spend a large portion of their lives after graduate school repaying student loans without the benefit of a terminal degree.

Lovitts also pointed out that there is a steep price that society, in general, must pay for attrition from graduate programs, in particular. There is potential knowledge and subject-matter expertise that non-completers cannot take into academic and non-academic careers, leaving them unable to leverage a terminal degree to effect positive change in a “socially productive manner” (p. 5). By leaving graduate programs without completing, individuals are “self-select[ing] out of or are de facto excluded from consideration for high-level positions” (p. 5) that would have allowed them to use the knowledge and expertise they may have, but that does not have the benefit of a doctoral degree. Lovitts further reasoned, and pointed out that, career concerns aside, society also loses the perspectives that non-completers could bring to societal issues. Indeed, the very types of research currently underway and the policies that result from research data are dependent upon the perspectives of students who completed doctoral programs - non-completers’ perspectives are typically lost entirely (Lovitts, 2001). This effect of attrition on society quite literally cannot be accounted for but must be taken into consideration.
Knowing all of this, the first objective in these interventions must be to reduce attrition in doctoral programs, which must begin with a review and revamp of existing program alignments. Therefore, the first recommended intervention is that doctoral programs make a realistic survey of their goals and/or desired outcomes; for example:

- Is the goal of the program to prepare potential future members of the faculty or practitioners in the area of study?
- Is the goal of the program to prepare students for teaching at the college level or for research, either academic or professional?
- Is the desired outcome that graduating students will seek and accept full-time, tenured faculty positions or non-academic careers in their area of study?
- Do the faculty believe the program will be able to provide two tracks for students to choose from, or that the program will prepare students for both academic and non-academic careers?

The key term in this step is “realistic;” program faculty must make an honest, informed assessment of the capacity and capabilities of program faculty and resources to achieve desired outcomes, as well as taking into serious consideration faculty preferences. For example, a doctoral program with a fairly low budget cannot realistically support two tracks for students and expect to adequately prepare them for two career options. Similarly, if a program’s faculty prefers to prepare students for faculty careers, it will not make sense to align program goals and objectives to non-academic career preparation. Setting realistic goals and objectives will increase the likelihood that program modifications will ultimately succeed.

After identifying the program goals and objectives, faculty should collect and examine data on recent graduates from their programs regarding post-graduate aspirations and outcomes. The
evaluation outlined in manuscript two of this dissertation in practice will be useful for the participating programs; for non-participating programs, a much simpler evaluation could be undertaken with a fully online questionnaire sent to recent graduates, though questions regarding socialization should ideally be included.

Faculty should also collect and carefully review data regarding non-completing students; a survey of these students will highlight gaps in socialization efforts that will likely not be uncovered in a similar survey of completing students. Including optional questions regarding diversity (e.g., gender, race and/or ethnicity, parent status, financial challenges) will give faculty insights into reasons for program abandonment that may not previously have been questioned. As Lovitts established via her study, “many of the questions raised and perspectives taken… were unlikely to have come from someone who never experienced noncompletion” (p. 5). The resulting data should give insight into how well the program goals and objectives are recently aligning with the realities of student outcomes; at this point, it may make sense for faculty to revisit their goals and objectives and consider realignment. However, this decision must be made by each programs’ faculty, as they will be the key decision makers and are the ones on whom the burden of enactment and change is placed.

Once data has been collected and examined and faculty have come to a final consensus regarding their program’s goals and objectives, it will be necessary for faculty to investigate the socialization efforts taking place within their programs to determine the extent to which those efforts align with program goals. Faculty should also carefully consider the extent to which these efforts serve a diverse student population, and in what ways the existing socialization efforts may be benefiting or hindering different students. This step of the process will require a good deal of honesty and transparency from involved faculty about both their efforts and those they have
observed from other faculty. It is likely that many faculty will be uncomfortable with this process, which is understandable when one is asked to judge one’s own efforts; however, discomfort must be set aside in order that programs get a full, honest picture of student socialization.

Once current socialization efforts have been determined, the faculty must then move on to determining how well those efforts align with anticipated outcomes, adjusting those efforts based on that assessment, and considering new socialization strategies to incorporate moving forward. A holistic perspective is important here; as Weidman, et al. (2001) stressed, creating a welcoming environment for diverse students begins with faculty “addressing cultural issues, acknowledging varying learning styles, modifying interactive patterns, acknowledging physical limitations, and providing emotional security for graduate students who speak in new and different voices” (p. 94). Considering areas in which a program may offer flexibility and adaptive options to students who may need them, even temporarily, would also increase the likelihood of attracting a more modern, diverse student population. In essence, if a doctoral program wishes to meet the needs of contemporary students, it must first create an environment in which those students are able to succeed.

As part of this process, it will be critical to consider both formal and informal socialization efforts led by faculty and incorporated into programs, as well as how faculty may facilitate peer-to-peer socialization outside the academic structure. In strategizing, programs must strive to consider students who do not fit the traditional doctoral student mold, and who have divergent needs and goals than many faculty may be accustomed to. It will be especially important for faculty to scrutinize their own informal socialization efforts and determine how they will adapt and modernize them for current and future students. Intentionally outlining these
efforts, how they align with the programmatic goals, and how faculty anticipate they will affect outcomes is critical to ensuring that programmatic goals and anticipated outcomes align with contemporary doctoral students’ needs and goals and are realistic to expect within the program. Realigning graduate programs to address socialization deficits is not a new idea, though it has likely not been put into practice to the extent that is necessary in our current higher education landscape. Substantive changes are necessary, as Weidman et al. (2001) pointed out, concluding that “although cosmetic changes in program structure may be the easiest to accomplish, a total program evaluation and subsequent makeover may prove beneficial in the long run” (p. 92). Though programmatic overhaul may seem a drastic step, it is one that has been encouraged in higher education, simply not yet put into widespread practice.

Perhaps most importantly, once this process has been completed and a socialization plan is put into place, programs must try to be transparent in communicating this plan to prospective students. Department and program websites should clearly outline programmatic goals and objectives, as well as the planned socialization efforts; the collected data concerning graduate outcomes; and faculty perspectives about socialization and students’ anticipated career paths. Faculty should also speak frankly with prospective students about how the socialization plan may affect their student experience in the program, and how programmatic goals may or may not align with a student’s goals.

This level of transparency gives prospective students the best chance at finding a program in which they “fit,” and in which their goals and anticipated career objectives are supported. Importantly, it also has the potential to decrease the rate of attrition in doctoral programs, which has personal, financial, and societal benefits that cannot be understated.
Program Standards

Insofar as these recommendations are concerned, standards refers to the fundamental elements encompassing program practices and expectations of students within that program. These standards represent the essential inputs from faculty and students within programs around which socialization efforts can be developed and play a critical role in determining programmatic outcomes.

Program Practices

In examining doctoral program practices, it is important to consider the established program alignment, goals, and objectives, and how those affect each step of doctoral studies beginning at the admission stage. Along with an established correlation between undergraduate GPA and entrance exam scores and graduate students’ ultimate success (Rothstein, et al., 1994), prospective students’ personalities, backgrounds, and aspirations play integral roles in not only their academic performance but also their socialization outcomes. Weidman, et al. (2001) included in their framework (p. 37) the importance of prospective students’ backgrounds and predispositions to the overarching socialization process. The “values, career aspirations, learning styles, beliefs, and so on” (p. 38) represented therein were described by Weidman, et al. to be nonlinear, interactive with all other elements of the framework, and at various levels of influence over graduate students. This is an expansion from previous nonlinear models in which student predispositions were not considered in the socialization process, per se, and generally were not an element of the admissions process (p. 27).

Considering this, program faculty must incorporate student backgrounds and predispositions during the admissions process along with requisite requirements such as undergraduate and masters GPA, entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, and the like.
The implementation would look different based on the needs of each department, along with their typical yearly admissions numbers; some programs may have the resources to hold in-depth interviews with each prospective student, while others may need to formulate essay questions for applicants to answer and submit for faculty review. Faculty should use this process to familiarize themselves with the applicants’ aspirations and anticipated outcomes and determine how well those align with the program goals and objectives; the most important factor here is to admit students whose goals align with program goals at the time of admission. Though student goals may change, and programs may realign, a good faith effort to make a good match at the time of admission is key.

Once faculty have made admissions decisions based on these criteria, it is critical that a process is in place to orient students to the program, their responsibilities, and the expectations of them. This represents an introductory socialization effort “that bridges the explicit and implicit curricula” (Miller, 2013, p. 368) that exists in doctoral programs and about which students have expressed confusion and frustration (Gardner, 2010a). One of the eight recommendations that emerged from the 2000 “Re-envisioning the Ph.D.” conference was that departments must “Provide explicit expectations for doctoral students,” including “Make transparent to graduate students the selection processes, developmental progress expectations, methods of assessment/evaluation, and comprehensive data on placement, time to degree, and completion rates” (Nyquist & Wulff, 2010). Along these lines, Campbell and Tierney (n.d.) as one of their recommendations for good practice in the Irvine Fellowship Program at the University of Southern California to “Publish and circulate an orientation manual. Make the orientation process less tacit” (Campbell & Tierney, n.d.).
It makes sense, then, to create a new student orientation for all incoming students, during which they would be apprised of the program standards and expectations of them from faculty - and most programs that offer orientations to their students believe this is an adequate introduction to doctoral studies, and that students will receive all other information as they proceed through the program. This is typically not the case. As Gardner (2010a) found through her study, students were either underwhelmed or overwhelmed at introductory orientation sessions, receiving too little information to be helpful or too much information for their current understanding of the program. As Gardner pointed out, “the experiences of students at particular times or phases of the graduate experience are distinct” (p. 76) and require orientation or induction resources for where students are situated within a program. Her recommendation is for programs to incorporate ongoing sessions for students as they progress through a program, planned for key junctures at which students, who have no frame of reference from previous experience, may be unsure of their next steps, or of the expectations placed upon them. Gardner articulated this process as

… developmentally appropriate induction programs should be structured to meet the needs of the particular students within their development phases, and can be supplemented by social and academic integration activities such as brown bags and seminars that bring together multigenerational students in the programs as well as the faculty. Examples might include formal writing groups for students writing their dissertations in the third phase and time management workshops for students in the second phase of their program. (pp. 76-77)

Based on this recommendation, program administrators and faculty should not plan just one initial orientation session but should identify the key stages at which students need further
guidance and plan a series of induction sessions and activities designed to acclimate students to the next phase(s) of the program.

As faculty and administrators oversee students’ progression, they should also continually gauge the effectiveness of the courses and socialization efforts within the program and be open to revising the program when necessary. Campbell and Tierney (n.d.) articulated this in their suggestions for good practice, listing “Examine the academic program to determine whether it provides the student with the information necessary to perform professional roles” as an element of faculty development. In redesigning the Ed.D. at Portland State University, Peterson (2017) noted that the faculty redesigned the existing curriculum, modified the comprehensive exam, and introduced an alternative to the traditional dissertation for interested students (p. 36). In doing this, the faculty addressed both students’ academic and post-graduate success, offering them the resources and support necessary to achieve programmatic and professional goals. This redesign aligns with the recommendations reiterated by Weidman, et al. (2001): “Specific improvements in graduate programs advocated by major national commissions include developing greater flexibility in curriculum and requirements as well as more options for students so that graduates are more versatile and complete degrees in a more timely fashion…” (p. v).

Some programs may have already tried to redesign or revamp their curricula and efforts; exemplary programs may have a process in place by which graduate feedback is annually solicited and considered when considering program curricula and offerings. However, it is incumbent upon faculty to realign their efforts to continual programmatic improvement. This process could involve setting benchmarks and evaluating student progress toward those benchmarks each term; soliciting student feedback at preset intervals during the program; inviting outside evaluation of curricula; or implementing courses or activities recently put into
practice in other departments and institutions. Meeting student needs is imperative, and revising programs to meet those needs is a necessary component of modern doctoral education.

The overarching theme of this set of recommendations is student support; this includes structured support efforts from program administrators, faculty, and peers throughout the academic program. Weidman, et al. (2001) concluded that “the needs of all students must be considered in the socialization and professionalization process,” (p. 95) whether that support is “financial, tutorial, social, or emotional,” (p. 95) placing the impetus for structured support systems squarely on the academic programs and departments. In her 2010 study of graduate programs, Gardner found that in “the department with the highest completion rate at this university, students spoke endlessly of the support they received from all constituencies in the department” (p. 69), reinforcing that student support is likely the backbone of student success in graduate programs. A high level of support during students’ academic careers can lower attrition rates, improve student experiences, and increase the likelihood of post-graduate career success - all of which faculty should strive toward. In Campbell and Tierney’s Irvine Project (n.d.), nearly all of the recommendations for good practice in Student Experience revolve around programmatic support of student efforts. Likewise, half of Nyquist and Wulff’s (2000) recommendations following the “Re-envisioning the Ph.D.” conference directly address student support structures and initiatives. Regardless of discipline, graduate - particularly doctoral - students need the support of their departments in order to successfully navigate a complex and often daunting landscape. The more structured support faculty and administrators can build into the body of a program, the higher the chances are that student satisfaction and success will rise alongside.
Expectations

Doctoral programs should have set and clearly articulated expectations of students and should ensure that those expectations are communicated to students before admission and reiterated throughout the program (Gardner 2010a). Eliminating ambiguity and committing to transparency will allow students to set benchmarks for themselves and commit to roles and activities that will enhance appropriate socialization. A beginning expectation of students is as simple as thoughtfully considering the doctoral programs to which they are applying, and evaluating how well each program fits with their own goals and objectives, as well as their own level of preparedness for assuming relevant professional roles (Weidman, et al., 2001). Once admitted to the program that best fits a student’s needs, that student is expected to participate in the curricular and socialization processes inherent to that program; students can be expected to “acquire new knowledge, become involved in the life of their academic programs and career fields, experience the peer climate, and invest in developing the capacities necessary to become professional practitioners in their chosen areas” (Weidman, et al., 2001, p. 38). Importantly, students can also reasonably be expected to adapt to the departmental, institutional, and peer climates surrounding their program of choice, making it even more critical that students find the right fit for their needs of a program.

Ryan (2008) encouraged graduate students to “take personal responsibility for the direction of [their] graduate study,” (p. 106) in which she emphasized the importance of goal setting, time management in terms of programmatic milestones, and meeting the benchmarks set by faculty. Hartel (2008) echoed this advice by naming internal drive and motivation as two of the key expectations of most graduate faculty. Hartel also included on his list of expectations work ethic, though he went on to point out that a satisfactory definition of that concept will vary
depending on the faculty member asked about it. However, he concluded that work ethic essentially reflects the initiative students put into their work, and, like Ryan outlined, the amount of self-direction students display (p. 121).

In terms of interpersonal dealings, Ryan also spoke of the need for students to build positive relationships with program faculty, including partnering with them on the aforementioned goal setting. Similarly, Hartel referenced his own experience as an advisor when outlining his expectations of graduate students, beginning with his expectation that students “will work within [his] system of mentoring” (p. 118) rather than change his own style for each student. Hartel emphasized this as “both professor and student… understanding the needs and approaches of the other person,” (p. 118) leading to an advising and mentoring relationship that benefits both parties and improves the academic experience. To facilitate a harmonious relationship, Hartel advised that graduate “students select their advisor based on that person’s reputation in dealing with graduate students,” (p. 119) and should “should honestly assess their needs in an advisor (e.g., do you need more guidance or less), and then find a person who will help them make the most of their skills” (p. 119). As with deciding on the right program for themselves, students must take the initiative to develop productive relationships with faculty whose interests and expectations are clearly defined and align with their own.

While part of the student experience in a doctoral program will be self-directed and dependent upon supervising faculty, there are still expectations of students in terms of progress toward degree completion. There has recently been attention focused on time to doctoral degree, with efforts made not to necessarily shorten the process, but to introduce a sense of efficiency to the process. One of Campbell and Tierney’s (n.d.) Suggestions for Good Practice in the Irvine Project is “Tighten standards for completion of degree - avoid prolonging student hood and
delaying transition to professional status.” As with many other aspects of socialization, what is considered satisfactory progress will vary by department and program, and often even by the supervising faculty; so long as each student falls within the timeline set by an institution, there is often great leeway. Hartel (2008) considered student progress from two angles, coursework and research, and advocates evaluating them separately. For coursework, he indicated simply that “student[s] must have a coursework plan in place that will allow them to complete all course requirements in a reasonable time and attain a grade of B or better in all courses” (p. 125) and mentioned that students and faculty should work together on the degree plan. The implication here is that students will take ownership of their own course progression, and that faculty will monitor academic progress. For research, he admitted that satisfactory progress is harder to define. He suggested that some faculty may base expectations on the amount of time students spend on research projects and the data they are able to collect, though noted that this may revolve around the requirements set by external funding agencies. Other faculty may not have data collection benchmarks, or may be supervising more complex studies, and will need to make their own judgments of student progress, which introduces a great deal of uncertainty that does not facilitate student success (Hartel, 2008). To create a student support structure that eliminates any ambiguity surrounding satisfactory progress in terms of research, programs should be encouraged to set certain criteria explicitly outlining research and/or data collection requirements that apply to all students, regardless of the scope of their project. As is good practice in academic courses, developing a rubric by which students’ research skills will be assessed will not only provide clear guidelines for students to follow, but will also help to eliminate bias in faculty evaluation of student progress. Leveling the playing field in this way creates a pathway for greater equity in doctoral programs in ways that may not be possible otherwise.
Aside from academic expectations of doctoral students, there are two areas in which academic departments should place stringent expectations upon their students: disposition and participation. Among doctoral students, critical dispositions will revolve around emotional intelligence, critical thinking skills, and the applications thereof. Fong-Luan (2015) described emotional intelligence as students' “ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotion adaptively” (p. 12) and to apply this feedback in their own actions. It is easy to see a connection between higher levels of emotional intelligence and more successful interpersonal relationships between students and faculty, and students with their peers. By leveraging emotional intelligence, students will likely be better able to understand and absorb their programs’ socialization efforts and achieve the levels of professionalization required for success in their fields.

Critical thinking encompasses a broad subset of skills related to emotional intelligence, level of education, and personal background; as such, it can be difficult to succinctly define. Fong-Luan described critical thinking skills in graduate students as “the tendency to learn from their past experiences and be questioning of evidence… [and] be actively open to new ideas, critical in evaluating these ideas and modifying their thinking in light of convincing evidence” (p. 12). Essentially, doctoral students should be able to think for themselves: do their own research, make their own connections, and formulate their own conclusions about ideas. This is strongly related to Ryan’s guidance that students be self-directed and maintain high levels of personal responsibility, and Hartel’s assertion that doctoral students take initiative for their own academic responsibilities. Faculty can encourage development of students’ critical thinking by helping them to develop the foundational skills necessary to conduct their own research and develop original ideas; the students’ role here is to be open to developing these skills, and to be
intentional about actively using them in their academic pursuits and in their participation in professional socialization efforts.

Insofar as participation is concerned, students’ involvement in the socialization process in their doctoral programs encompasses much more than simply being present or going through the motions. Appropriate professional socialization requires that students commit to experience, absorb, and engage with the socialization efforts made by their academic departments; immersion in the process is essential. Gardner and Barnes (2007) found that graduate students not only clearly differentiated their involvement during graduate programs from their involvement during undergraduate programs, but saw graduate participation as “direct preparation for their future careers, providing them with skills, connections, and better understandings of what is expected of them in these chosen careers” (p. 381). Hirschy, et al. (2015) articulated this clearly, insisting that proper professional socialization requires “nascent professionals… to engage in authentic experiences that heighten self-awareness and a deeper understanding of themselves as practitioners in the profession” (p. 778) in environments created for students to explore their academic and anticipated professional fields. Students must engage in knowledge acquisition via “continuous socialization and re-socialization” (Ongiti, 2012, p. 37) throughout their doctoral programs, participating in formal and information activities alongside faculty and peers. Through engagement with the academic curricula and socialization activities, doctoral students may reach integration (Tinto, 1975) which both lowers the chance at attrition and prepares them for professional success. Logically, it follows that, when students are matched with the right academic programs and are apprised before entering that program of the program’s socialization efforts and expectations of students, that participation will naturally occur. Of course, even with safeguards in place, there may still be situations in which there are program-
student mismatches, resulting in students who are non-participatory and lack investment in the socialization process. Such circumstances may be difficult to address and navigate; ultimately, though, neither the student nor the program will benefit from this situation, and the student may be actively harming their chances at appropriate socialization and successful outcomes. As such, it is incumbent upon faculty to either counsel these students out of the program, and hopefully into a better program match, or work with the student to facilitate participation and investment on their part.

Finally, an essential expectation of doctoral programs, particularly as it relates to postgraduate success, is that students exemplify collegiality in their dealings with program faculty and peers. According to Gregg’s (1972) study, collegiality in student-faculty relationships “was consistently found to be an effective predictor of [academic and non-academic] satisfaction,” (p. 497) and Garder (2010b) further observed that strong student-faculty relationships led to open-door policies that facilitated conversations more complex than typical academic advising “that constituted the bulk of [faculty] socialization” (p. 46) efforts with graduate students. In terms of overall program satisfaction, one of the primary indicators for many students revolved around their perceptions of their relationships with program faculty (Lechuga, 2011), in which students who reported positive relationships also rated their graduate experiences as more beneficial. In doctoral programs, specifically, these faculty-student relationships have proven to be “critical to doctoral completion, satisfaction, and career choice” (O’Meara, et al., 2014, p. 170).

Improving faculty-student interactions, and student perceptions thereof, may be one of the keys to reducing doctoral student attrition and improving professional outcomes. Where students perceive their interactions with faculty to be more positive, it is also likely true that students are receiving higher level socialization efforts and are more apt to internalize the
professionalization passed on from faculty. Obviously, students must take initiative in building these relationships with the faculty members with whom they have the most in common, or from whom they most value mentoring and advice. However, it is incumbent upon faculty when setting this expectation that they facilitate the beginnings of these relationships, and that they foster students’ efforts to have meaningful interactions. Though many would consider these relationships, and the building of them, should be relegated to informal socialization, there is no reason that a structure should not be put into place to formalize these interactions and the socialization that emerges. Formalizing this process would allow faculty to be specific about their mentoring approach and criteria for students, and students would be able to make informed decisions about which faculty members would provide the most beneficial relationships for their needs.

Depending on the program, and especially the faculty and student cultures therein, student-faculty relationships may be secondary to peer relationships in terms of socialization, professionalization, and satisfaction. Weidman, et al. reported that collegiality in graduate student relationships, especially those in cohort-based programs, “influences the learning process, opens support mechanisms, and enriches the experience socially and emotionally,” (p. 62) and helps to mitigate some of the anxiety inherent to graduate education. In fact, Gardner (2010a) found that “support from other students was mentioned far more frequently than support from advisors or faculty members” and that peers were often the ones encouraging student participation in socialization activities (Gardner & Barnes, 2007). Doctoral students interviewed in Adler and Adler’s 2005 study reported that in collegial cohorts “there was instant relief in finding others with similar (non-academic) interests, people who shared values with them, or friends they made” (p. 14). Conversely, among students in less compatible, more competitive
programs, “divisions within the group left them feeling alone” and “anecdotes of cheating, backstabbing, gossiping, and cliquish behavior were not uncommon” (p. 14). In terms of professionalization, the tone of these peer relationships is critical, given the sheer amount of socialization that results from them, to say nothing of the likelihood that peers will continue their relationships into the professional world post-graduation. In doctoral programs, students are being socialized and socializing one another to both academic and professional norms and practices.

With so much importance placed on these peer relationships, it is crucial that collegiality be emphasized as a core concept of a program, and that unhealthy competition be discouraged as much as possible. Much of peer collegiality is dependent upon students themselves to build and sustain positive relationships with one another; if faculty are intentionally admitting students who best “fit” within their programs, these peer relationships should form more naturally. However, academic departments can play crucial roles in fostering a collegial environment. Weidman, et al. suggested that programs should develop organized activities for students to take part in together, and Campbell and Tierney (n.d.) recommend as good practice that faculty “establish collaborative learning communities or cohorts” (n.p.) in which students can work together throughout their academic program. In their own relationships with students, faculty can also monitor peer relationships, assess collegiality from the outside, and redirect students as necessary. However, allowing students to build their own cooperative, collegial communities will go far in raising student satisfaction in their doctoral experience.

**Mentoring and Advising**

Faculty will take on multiple roles - teacher, advisor, mentor, etc. - during students’ time in their academic programs (Gregg, 1972) with socialization happening in each role to varying
degrees. In terms of knowledge transmission and integration to professional norms, faculty are the primary socializing agents, responsible for “shaping a professional self-image that is presumably congruent with a student’s total self” and serving “as a gatekeeper who sanctions students’ entry into the professional realm” (Weidman, et al., 2001, p. 66). When acting as advisors and mentors, faculty are socializing students more directly than in any other role they take; the impact of individual and small-group faculty-student interactions cannot be understated. In their mentoring capacities, faculty

play active roles in encouraging new professionals to reflect on and make sense of the expectations, values, relationships, roles, and responsibilities of their personal and professional identities, thereby promoting a sense of individual agency and self-authorship among new professional members. (Hirschy, et al., 2015, p. 790)

The importance of faculty as mentors cannot be understated, nor can the necessity of high levels of competence in faculty for all that is required of them in this role. The second main recommendation that emerged from the Re-envisioning the Ph.D. conference (2000) centered entirely around programs providing appropriate mentoring to students, the elements of which are applicable to - and strongly encouraged for - all doctoral programs:

- Multiple mentors.
- Written guidelines for mentors.
- Adequate preparation for mentoring by graduate faculty based on research about effective mentoring practices.
- Organized, institutionalized opportunities for reflection and feedback between graduate students and faculty mentors.
- Mentoring for a broad range of career aspirations. (Nyquist and Wulff, 2000)
It is not possible for all five of these recommendations to occur naturally during an academic program; instead, program faculty must make a concerted effort to integrate into the program pedagogy and timeline these essential mentorship practices.

Mentoring is an area in which doctoral programs may need to provide more guidance and resources for faculty, as there historically has been little to no formal training for those taking on mentoring responsibilities (Hall & Burns, 2009). Consequently, the structure and content of mentoring relationships is left to the discretion of each individual mentor, who may not have the correct skill set or approach to successfully guide doctoral students in the most effective manner. As a result, many faculty “often mentor students as they were mentored themselves - a pattern of behavior that tends to reproduce the status quo” (Hall & Burns, 2009, pps. 49-50); and in this case, the status quo is not what should be perpetuated, as it does not best serve the needs of contemporary doctoral students.

Also to be avoided in modern mentoring relationships is the related concept that “mentoring relationships are typically perceived as more successful when doctoral students... take on the identities that are valued by their mentors and/or institutions,” (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 50) and that more problematic mentoring relationships “are not inherently reciprocal and may in fact be coercive” (Hall & Burns, 2009, p. 60). Given that students are expected to show initiative and agency in their doctoral studies, and to take responsibility for doctoral studies, being faced with coercion or pressure to adopt others’ identities is, at best, counterproductive. To avoid exerting undue influence over mentees, faculty should approach mentoring relationships from an interpretive viewpoint, which argues that students “have their own choices to make, which should be assisted by the organization.” (Ongiti, 2012, p. 36) Important in this approach is that faculty are not making decisions for students; rather, mentors should be providing
foundational knowledge, perspectives, and experience to inform student choices. Ongiti described students as “active agents in the process of socialization” (p. 36) in the interpretive approach and emphasized agency and identity construction as a main tenet of the graduate experience. Considering this, faculty should be careful to monitor their own interactions with mentees to ensure that coercion is not taking place. Programs may also consider a system of check and balances within a structured mentoring system to ensure that student agency is being prioritized; as Nyquist and Wulff suggested, having multiple mentors or a team mentoring program may be the best possible route to ensuring that no students are unduly influenced by any one faculty member.

Successful mentoring relationships take a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of both faculty and students and rely on structured practices as well as details as small as body language during everyday interactions (Lechuga, 2011). Faculty must be not only competent mentors, but also continuously monitor their own interactions with students to ensure appropriate and equitable treatment and socialization of students. Equality in faculty interactions with doctoral students is of the utmost importance, especially considering that students who do not fit the mold of the traditional doctoral student - white males aged 22-30 - have reported their perceptions of inequality in their relationships with faculty (Weidman, et al., 2001). Ensuring that all students receive the same socialization and professionalization efforts and opportunities is the only way to ensure that all students will leave a program with the skills and dispositions necessary for success in their chosen career fields. Mindful planning to integrate these recommendations into programs will create opportunities for faculty and students to achieve mutually beneficial relationships in which faculty can be described as “allies, ambassadors, and master teachers” (Lechuga, 2011, p. 767).
One way in which some institutions are providing structure to their mentoring efforts is via Individual Development Plans (IDPs), a tool that has historically been used in professional settings for goal setting and accountability in performance reviews. In doctoral programs, IDPs are being used “across disciplinary areas to foster reflection and communication about students’ goals, aspirations, needs and accomplishments” (Rutgers University School of Graduate Studies, 2021) and to “help guide their career development” (University of Oregon Division of Graduate Studies, n.d.). These IDPs are designed to be individualized and dynamic, as much a tool for continuous goal setting and self-assessment as they are for conversation guides between students and their faculty mentors (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2023). Requiring the use of IDPs will allow students agency in planning their professionalization goals, allow students to record their progress and accomplishments - which will serve them well in terms of resume/vita building - and help guide conversations between students and their faculty mentors. Faculty will benefit from the use of them, as well, as they will have an ongoing record of student goals and efforts, and a guide to help them determine the best courses of action they can take for each student. Ideally, programs would also use IDPs, both current and completed, to inform program planning and curriculum development. This type of methodical, systematic mentoring makes students and faculty partners in students’ doctoral journeys, allowing students to build agency and informing faculty on how they can best support their mentees.

As with mentoring responsibilities, faculty are often given little to no helpful training to act as advisors to doctoral students. And, as with mentoring, faculty too often maintain the status quo when advising students, relying on what they remember from their own experiences as advisees in their own doctoral programs (Hall & Burns, 2009). In professional advising, this is problematic when faculty are advising students whose career aspirations differ from their own.
Laursen et al. (2012) found that faculty reported that they “could best give advice about academic career paths like their own,” (p. 4) but who were ill-prepared to properly advise students about alternate professional options. Because the primary burden of career advising typically falls on faculty, the result of this socialization gap means that “many students were ill-informed about the characteristics and expectations of potential work settings,” (Laursen et al., 2012, p. 4) leaving them unaware of the skills and dispositions needed for non-academic careers and unable to properly assess their own suitability for those roles. Further, students in these situations “have little chance for investment, or mentally committing to a particular professional role and learning its expectations,” (Laursen, et al., 2012, p. 5) potentially leaving them adrift when they begin their professional careers.

More problematic is the reality that, in many traditional doctoral programs, faculty have more incentive to guide their advisees into academic careers than into non-academic practitioner careers. In the traditional doctoral culture, faculty tend to socialize students into academic careers because the system “rewards faculty whose students obtain jobs at research universalities” (Helm, et al., 2012, p. 7) where it does not reward faculty whose students obtain practitioner jobs. This remains true even in a higher education climate in which full-time, tenure track positions are declining rapidly (American Association of University Professors, 2018) and the number of graduating doctoral students far outweighs the number of available faculty positions in the United States (Lehker & Furlong, 2006). As a result, it is likely that some faculty are not only improperly advising students regarding overall career choice but are actively pushing them into a field in which they have little chance of long-term success.

There are two possible solutions here: first, departments can invest in intensive, ongoing mentoring and advising training for all faculty, build structured mentoring programs with checks
and balances, and reward faculty based on multiple career outcomes for their students; second, departments can consider outsourcing their career services to an independent office, removing the possibility of improper advising. Either way, change must be made to ensure that students are socialized for the career paths they choose independently, with guidance that does not veer into coercion.

**Career Services and Exploration Opportunities**

A major source of mismatch in the socialization efforts of many graduate, specifically doctoral, programs lies with career services and advising (Laursen et al., 2012). Not only does the current doctoral system “not adequately prepare students for the needs of a changing workforce,” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 73) but socialization efforts in place may result in “students form[ing] a professional identity that may be incongruent with the workplaces they will encounter” (Helm, et al., 2012, p. 7). Also worrying is the implication that even students pursuing academic careers may not be adequately prepared for an evolving higher education career via their doctoral programs (Helm, et al., 2012, p. 12), and that those students would be woefully unprepared to enter roles outside academe. In Helm, et al.’s study, students were transparent that there were “significant gaps” (p. 12) between the ways in which they had been professionally socialized in their academic programs and the skills they believed to be the most relevant to the realities of their careers. The problem is widespread enough that in their 2012 study, Helm, et al. found that “career services and guidance for academic and non-academic careers are the most pressing needs” (p. 11) in terms of career preparation in doctoral programs, and the third overall recommendation of the 2000 Re-envisioning the Ph.D. conference concerned programs revising their approaches to their student’s career exploration opportunities (Nyquist & Wulff, n.d.). Clearly, then, there is great need for a shift in career advising and the
presentation of career exploration opportunities in doctoral programs; the following recommendation is a two-pronged approach, requiring both an overhaul of program involvement with career exploration initiatives and incorporating an independent graduate career services office.

While faculty have reported that they are willing and able to provide relevant assistance in their students’ job searches, the reality is that students are often told to make their career choices before faculty will offer further guidance, (Laursen, et al., 2012) and the majority of faculty are not able to offer practical help to those seeking non-academic careers. As a result, Laursen, et al. learned that students “did not generally hold well-formed understandings of their career options” (p. 4) and were left adrift if their interests fell to practitioner roles. These faculty attitudes, and the corresponding effect on students, is obviously counterproductive to producing well-socialized students who are prepared to enter their workforce of choice. Further, O’Meara, et al. (2014) found that faculty openness to non-academic career exploration was a key factor in student satisfaction, and that students characterized the associated support they received from their programs as “unique” (p. 165) from other departments. Because student support is a key tenet of doctoral socialization, programs should strive to be unique in this area, perhaps more than any other.

The primary recommendation here is that faculty receive extensive, ongoing training in alternate career paths in which their students may show interest, so that they are able to speak knowledgeably about all options with their advisees. This includes liaising with professionals currently practicing in relevant career fields, making connections with employers in relevant non-academic industries, and even attending professional conferences, with or without their students. Learning the nuances and norms of the fields students may enter is critical to programs’
ability to develop and incorporate appropriate program socialization efforts and to support
“graduate student agency by encouraging and legitimizing multiple career pathways” (O’Meara,
et al., 2014, p. 165).

While individual faculty efforts are critical, overall programmatic commitment to holistic
career exploration will give students the best opportunity to find the right career paths for
themselves, and to receive the socialization opportunities that will improve their chances at
professional success. One component of graduate programs that was “associated with higher
scores on congruence with the field’s values” (p. 81) in Liddell, et al.’s 2014 study was program
sponsorship of “academic enrichment activities” (p. 81) relevant to both graduate studies and
professional socialization. Example of activities relevant to doctoral student socialization would
be hosting external speakers for seminars or brown bag series (O’Meara, et al., 2014); facilitating
writing workshops; organizing student research symposia; and hosting program-specific job
fairs. Even an orientation series, if well-integrated into the timeline of the program, would be an
excellent example of ongoing socialization and enrichment.

Programs should also consider the implementation of work-integrated learning (WIL)
into their curricula where possible. This type of socialization is “provided through the formal
curriculum contained in the academic program” (Sonnenschein, et al., 2018, p. 1293) and is one
of the core processes of Sonnenschein, et al.’s revised model of “Higher Education Students’
Professional Socialization” (p. 1292). The importance of WIL is not to be understated, as
Liddell, et al. (2014) determined that students who participated in “assistantships, internships,
[and] practica” reported that those experiences were “more influential than in-class experiences
when it came to students’ understanding of institutional culture and politics, expanding
professional networks, and understanding professional expectations” (p. 81). Further, of the
students who participated in O’Meara, et al.’s study (2014), those “who were able to role play and rehearse their future career roles felt more confident as legitimate members of their desired professions and were able to discover whether or not they enjoyed these aspects of potential future positions” (p. 166). This level of socialization serves to provide students with a type of on-the-job training and can help bolster students’ confidence in their chosen profession and their ability to perform at high levels in those careers.

Faculty involvement in WIL as experience supervisors could provide invaluable integration of in-class instruction and practical application by ensuring that site supervisors understand the goals and objectives of the doctoral curricula, asking site supervisors to give input regarding “professionalism, ethics, and diversity” (Liddell, et al., 2014, p. 82) in their fields of practice, and soliciting their cooperation “to help students examine implications of in-class learning for practice in the field and how students can bring perspectives from practice into the classroom” (Liddell, et al., 2014, p. 82). Giving students the opportunity to take part in WIL experiences will further the professional socialization goals of the department and allow students to “develop relevant attributes for their future career and give them a competitive advantage in recruitment” (Sonnenschein, et al., 2018, p. 1293).

It should not come as a surprise that working in a field provides the best opportunity to learn about it; however, the number of programs that do not account for these opportunities is, perhaps, unsurprisingly high. Laursen, et al. (2012) reported that doctoral students often were not afforded the opportunity to participate in this type of career exploration as “the time was never right to explore career options… investigating career options seemed only to delay the degree itself” (pps. 4-5). Considering the number of doctoral students who lack understanding of their career options, as well as those who are ill-informed about the specifics of their career goals, a
main goal of doctoral programs should be to incorporate WIL opportunities into their curricula in order to “foster a wider array of skills that prepare graduates to meet 21st-century workforce needs and to adapt professionally to new careers in emerging fields” (Laursen, et al., 2012, p. 1).

Obviously, these academic enrichment activities would be of most benefit to the students participating in them; however, it is important to not overlook the benefit to program faculty who will gain insight into student needs, be better positioned to meet those needs, and can immerse themselves in professional norms with which they may not otherwise come into contact. Understanding the reality of non-academic career norms, requirements, and processes will allow faculty to be better mentors and make changes in themselves and their programs to legitimize multiple career paths that will ultimately benefit their students.

While such programmatic efforts are invaluable in providing doctoral students with the socialization necessary for post-graduate success, they do not address the larger scale career exploration needs of many doctoral students. Traditionally, career services for doctoral students have not been considered by most programs because, having enrolled in a relatively specialized degree program, “they often are assumed to need no career guidance” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 74) and have their post-graduate routes planned upon enrollment. On the contrary, Laursen et al. (2012) insisted that career exploration should take place during students’ time in doctoral programs, and that “the career exposure and preparation that Ph.D. students receive is critical to the future of their discipline as a whole” (p. 1). Because professional socialization is the critical element in students’ doctoral experiences, it would behoove programs to work with their institutions to create graduate career services offices that exist independently of departments and “provide tailored career services to graduate students through a centralized location” (Helm, et al., 2012, p. 13). Lehker & Furlong (2006) also advocated for independent career services for
graduate students, as they found that departmental socialization efforts do not “address necessarily the career needs of graduate and professional students” (p. 74) and that graduate students “could benefit from services designed to help them identify and explore their career interests” (p. 74). A main recommendation emerging from Helm, et al.’s study was “that institutions provide institutional and departmental support for student exploration and choice of non-academic careers by offering specific services and programs to aid students exploring potential career options,” (p. 14) which is only logistically possible with the implementation of dedicated career services.

Graduate career services programs could look to undergraduate career services programs for much of the programming that could be offered; however, it is important that the services are adapted specifically to the needs of graduate students, as “graduate students will be drawn to services and resources they believe are designed specifically for them,” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 73) but are likely to avoid anything too general in nature. Because the needs of graduate, particularly doctoral, students are so unique, these offices would need to seek out professionals familiar with graduate education and with industries that house career paths that may fit the needs of students in affiliated programs. Those professionals would be able to work closely with program faculty to implement unique career services that align with the goals and objectives of each program, help integrate professionalization activities into the curricula, and even assist with facilitating WIL activities. Importantly, these professionals would be neutral resources for students whose mentors and advisors do not have the expertise to guide them in professionalization for non-academic careers, or who are wary of faculty reaction to them seeking practitioner careers.
In terms of student agency, Helm, et al. (2012) found that “graduate students… also linked the sense of agency they felt in achieving their career goals to tangible resources provided by their department,” (p. 14) and post-graduate career advancement was linked with the professionalization resources and activities made available to students during their academic programs (O’Meara, et al., 2014). A career services office could provide tangible resources such as graduate-specific career coaching; networking opportunities with appropriate companies and individuals; alumni messaging and engagement in networking efforts; workshops designed to assist students with the intricacies of job seeking and applications as doctoral graduates; and even pivoting from academic career goals to practitioner career goals. A number of universities have already put into place a dedicated graduate career services office, either within their graduate schools or colleges of liberal arts (Georgetown University, n.d.; Princeton University, 2023; University of Minnesota, 2023; University of Notre Dame, 2023) and are offering services akin to the ones suggested here. It seems, then, that the implementation of graduate career services would be possible at most universities, and that each institution would be able to decide in which existing office such services should be placed for maximum benefit to students. Because “career services can prove instrumental in fostering graduate students’ career development,” (Lehker & Furlong, 2006, p. 73) it makes sense to invest in an office or program dedicated to offering graduate student-specific career services.
Summary of Recommendations

In summary, the recommendations presented here are that programs should:

- Review and revamp existing program alignments following a realistic survey of program goals and/or desired outcomes;
- Investigate the socialization efforts taking place within their programs to determine the extent to which those efforts align with program goals and serve a diverse student population;
- Put into place a detailed socialization plan and make an effort to be transparent in communicating this plan to prospective students;
- Incorporate student backgrounds and predispositions during the admissions process along with requisite requirements;
- Create a new student orientation for all incoming students, during which they would be apprised of the program standards and expectations of them from faculty;
- Identify the key stages at which students need further guidance and plan a series of induction sessions and activities designed to acclimate students to the next phase(s) of the program;
- Continually gauge the effectiveness of the courses and socialization efforts within the program and redesign the program as necessary;
- Set and clearly articulate expectations of students ensure that those expectations are communicated to students before admission and reiterated throughout the program;
- Encourage students to take the initiative to develop productive relationships with faculty whose interests and expectations are clearly defined and align with their own;
• Set expectations for satisfactory progress toward degree completion and have a clearly articulated system to track that progress;
• Set stringent expectations upon students regarding disposition and participation during their doctoral programs;
• Set expectations for students’ collegiality in their dealings with program faculty and peers;
• Provide guidance and resources for faculty regarding mentoring, and put into place a structured mentoring program in which students are required to participate;
• Require the use of IDPs within structured mentoring programs;
• Provide to faculty extensive, ongoing training in alternate career paths so they are better able to advise their students regarding multiple career options;
• Incorporate planned, relevant academic enrichment activities, including WIL experiences, into the structure of the program;
• Work with their institutions to create independent graduate career services offices, cooperate with career services professionals on programming efforts, and encourage students to take advantage of the services offered.

These recommendations are extensive and will likely vary in realistic implementation based on the programs, departments, and institutions involved. However, the core of these recommendations is doctoral student support, which has historically been underdeveloped in most doctoral programs. Providing appropriate support for contemporary doctoral students will set them on the path for success in careers not limited to academia.
Leadership Statement

Effective leadership will be critical to carrying out the evaluation itself, as well as implementing the previously stated recommendations in various departments. In both the evaluation and implementation phases, it will be necessary to work with faculty, staff, students, and graduates of multiple doctoral programs, as well as university leadership and some external constituents. When working with such diverse populations, it is critical to decide upon a comprehensive leadership philosophy, and to follow through by acting according to that philosophy at every opportunity. Not only does a solid leadership philosophy help to guide decision-making and interactions with others, it will also allow others to set their own expectations based on what they have observed.

Leadership and the Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate (CPED) Framework

The CPED Framework focuses on “creating quality, rigorous practitioner preparation” in the Ed.D. via program redesign that, in part, “prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021b). Also central to the CPED approach are collaboration, communication, and problem-solving - all integral traits of good leadership.

CPED’s Design-Concepts reflect programmatic inputs to supporting leadership development via academic programs. Importantly, students are expected to prioritize inquiry in their practitioner roles, using their education and research to “design innovative solutions to address the problems of practice” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021a) and to participate in structured mentoring “that aligns with adult learner needs while reflecting a program’s values, norms, and the CPED Framework” (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021a).
Doctorate, 2021b). Inquiry and problem-solving are concepts around which dynamic leadership revolves; encouraging students’ growth in these areas will foster their academic and professional growth and will provide a foundation upon which leadership skills can be built. From dedicated mentoring, students can gain perspective of leadership challenges from those who are directly experiencing them and can observe firsthand various styles of and approaches to leadership which they may then incorporate into their own practice. In short, developing scholarly practitioners via the CPED Framework will, in turn, develop leaders who are prepared for the challenges of contemporary higher education administration.

**Leadership Philosophy**

It is my belief that effective leaders in higher education are able to not only impact student outcomes but are situated to guide the trajectory of higher education through a continually evolving social and educational landscape. While it is true that there are a myriad of approaches and styles to which one can adhere, I hold firm that all successful leaders must understand that leadership is a responsibility not to be taken lightly; that effective leaders must be both responsive and adaptive; and that leading by example includes fostering respect and collaboration in all relationships. Maintaining a holistic vision of common goals and working continuously toward equity and improvement will help us successfully lead higher education through what could be unprecedented changes in the coming years. In order to foster this philosophy, I believe that a combination of approaches to leadership and leadership theories are appropriate to incorporate in my practice and will be particularly pertinent to the implementation of my dissertation in practice (DiP).
Approaches to Leadership

There is no one approach to leadership that fits cleanly with my overall philosophy; instead, I have chosen a combination of three distinct approaches, with elements of each integral to the whole. Northouse (2019) amalgamated leadership traits from six previous studies into his Major Leadership Traits: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (p. 67). This traits approach to leadership identifies the “traits that individuals might hope to possess or wish to cultivate if they want to be perceived by others as leaders” (Northouse, 2019, p. 68), though acknowledges that possession of all these traits is not functionally required of leaders. To these five fundamental traits Northouse identified, I would add emotional intelligence, an as-yet understudied trait (Northouse, 2019), as necessary for effective, responsive leadership in our modern, multicultural society.

Within the skills approach, there is a subset of competencies most relevant to the leadership style I strive to embody, particularly concerning implementation of my DiP: problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. Problem-solving is an integral part of leadership, and building the skills necessary to identify and solve problems creatively and efficiently is paramount to not only effective leadership, but followers’ perceptions of leadership skills. Related are social judgment skills, which encompass perspective taking, social perceptiveness, behavioral flexibility, and social performance (Northouse, 2019), all of which are required of good leaders who wish to work with others to solve organizational problems. Particularly relevant in this competency is the ability of leaders to communicate their vision, mediate disagreements, and provide direction and support (Northouse, 2019). Finally, knowledge, or “having developed an assortment of complex schemata for learning and organizing data” (Northouse, 2019, p. 110), is an essential competency for all leaders, as one
cannot lead effectively without understanding both the big picture and the details therein. In terms of leadership in the context of my DiP and my career, I view each of these competencies as non-negotiable; lacking one would essentially mean lacking the leadership skills necessary to uphold my responsibilities to followers. It is my responsibility to identify and preemptively solve problems before they become issues for others; likewise, it is critical that I can work with others to solve organizational problems as a team. And if I were to lack knowledge of the area in which I was set to lead, I would consider that a fatal failure of my leadership, in general. Though others around me may have more expert-level subject knowledge, I nevertheless consider it to be my responsibility to know the essentials that fall within my purview.

My final approach to leadership is based on Blake and Mouton’s Leadership Grid, which seeks to explain leadership styles based on concern for people and concern for production (Northouse, 2019). Though there is likely a place for each of the styles on this grid, the one to which I am most strongly drawn is Team Management (9, 9), which shows high concern for both people and production. This style has been touted as the most advantageous, though not the most common (Cho, et al., 2018); based on situationality, there may also be times when changing to a different style might be most appropriate. As its name suggests, this style emphasizes teamwork and participation from a group, and “satisfies a basic need in employees to be involved and committed to their work” (Northouse, 2019, p. 142). Because my DiP relies heavily on Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE), which prioritizes the involvement of primary intended users throughout the evaluation process (Patton, 2012), teamwork will be essential. Therefore, it makes sense that my approach to leadership throughout the process should also be team oriented.
Leadership Styles

Like my approach to leadership, the type of leadership which I wish to emulate does not fit neatly into one style; rather, I have chosen again to select critical aspects of multiple leadership styles to construct one unique to my needs. First, with what is perhaps the best overall match, I identify strongly with Transformational Leadership; this “multidimensional leadership style” (van Dierendonck, et al., 2013, p. 545) encourages leaders to focus on individuals’ needs, emotions, and long-term goals (Northouse, 2019). There is extra emphasis placed on leaders engaging and connecting with followers, which appeals to me personally and professionally. As my DiP is concerned with improving student career preparedness and outcomes, it makes sense to follow a leadership style attuned to individual needs.

Authenticity is important to me personally, so Authentic Leadership is a style that appeals to me professionally and within the context of my DiP. This style of leadership naturally “occurs when individuals enact their true selves in their role as a leader” (Leroy, et al., 2015, p. 1677) and can encourage followers to do the same, leading to increased satisfaction and performance of individuals involved (Leroy, et al., 2015). The intrapersonal and interpersonal components of this style appeal to me, as leadership is both within and without the leader, as well as the fact that it “can be nurtured in a leader, rather than [exist] as a fixed trait” (Northouse, 2019, p. 309).

Finally, because of the impact situationality can have, it makes sense to me to follow components of the Adaptive Leadership style. This style focuses on complex changes that occur, and the type of leadership that is required to navigate through them; perhaps more importantly, it “encourages learning by asking tough questions and by reframing expectations” (Raei & LeMaster, 2021, p. 13). Because Adaptive Leadership can be emotionally challenging for followers and stakeholders (Raei & LeMaster, 2021), emotional intelligence - a trait I already
aspire to - is required in order to keep a team cohesive and individuals functioning through changes. Because higher education is continually evolving, basing leadership at least partially around an adaptive approach is essential.

Leadership itself is complex and multifaceted, which is why I believe my approach to it should be, as well. Merging traits, approaches, and styles is the most effective way to create a leadership style that is unique to me and the needs of my career and DiP implementation. My leadership style is one that is personal to me, because it aligns my professional outlook with many of my personal convictions and attitudes; I believe this is a path to authentic leadership that will allow me to build trust and rapport among those whom I support and who support me.

**Personal Leadership Approach**

I have been working in higher education at a single institution for over ten years now and have had the opportunity to hold several different positions during that time. Due to the structure of this university and its approach regarding staff, I have also been positioned to learn and undertake a variety of duties and responsibilities, and to, at various times, take on leadership roles for different activities and durations. In my work with faculty and other members of staff, I have also had the opportunity to observe leadership in action from individuals with vastly different approaches to leadership and service. All have served as lessons, and some have been incorporated into my own philosophy and approach.

Collegiality is the cornerstone of my leadership philosophy and approach. I have found that this is a concept that is much discussed, particularly in higher education, but is often not necessarily implemented into personal practice. Especially in recent years, I have made it my intentional practice to exhibit and embody collegiality with my direct coworkers, supervisors, and campus constituents. Being a good colleague and a good leader of colleagues is something I
am still working to build within myself, but there are several elements of my own practice of which I am proud:

- Every so often, I take random “pulse checks” of those working in our shared office suite, trying to gauge mood and mental state; if anyone exhibits the need for more support, I am intentional about finding ways to give it to them. From this practice, I have found that others are typically more open and honest when they are asked directly - even in situations where leaders have a standing “open-door” policy. Understanding this has led to conversations and positive change that I doubt would have been possible without such intentionality.

- I am always willing to share my knowledge, expertise, and contacts with others, and make a point to offer this assistance regularly. If I can be of assistance, I will, whether that is with taking ownership of a task within a colleague’s larger project; teaching a colleague about something with which I am familiar; or providing contacts and introductions to campus constituents. On the other side, I am always open about needing this type of guidance from others, and publicly acknowledging their expertise in areas where I am lacking. Promoting this type of information-sharing environment allows for the expansion of institutional knowledge and the recognition of individuals for their subject-matter expertise.

- When it comes to tasks that are necessary to keep our office and department functioning, I consider nothing above or beneath me; if there is something asked of me, I will do my best to accomplish what is needed. To this end, I have been asked to step in to speak at an open house event, assist with undergraduate programs, help make mailing labels, and even install a new golf cart cover. The nature of working in higher education means that
all tasks, even those that may seem menial, are necessary for the overall proper functioning of the department and institution; considering a task too trivial or advanced for my attention could lead to it being left undone, which has the potential to negatively impact students, staff, or faculty. Being willing to take on the tasks I am asked to handle, and even volunteering to do so when I see the need, helps to keep things running smoothly.

- I have become intentional about how I build relationships with my colleagues and supervisors, and in how I interact with them daily. Though it may sound simple, it is something that is too often overlooked: I treat my coworkers like people who exist with full lives outside the university, who are more than their titles or jobs, and who have unique backgrounds and experiences to bring to our shared table. I make a point to have non-work-related conversations, to allow others to talk about their own experiences, and to keep the person - not the position - at the forefront. I have found that this approach encourages others to take a collegial approach of their own, and to become involved in broader discussions that bring individuals together “outside” work while still in the office.

- Finally, I am committed to continuous learning, both about my own role and responsibilities, as well as about the overarching mission of my department and the university. Because I believe that knowledge and skill are non-negotiable traits for leaders, it is important to me to learn continuously to ensure that I have a high-level understanding of all the elements that comprise my role, tasks, and responsibilities. That is a large part of my pursuit of the Ed.D. and is why I will continue finding opportunities to learn and grow as a professional, a colleague, and a human being.
Reflection

I have appreciated the opportunity to engage with my dissertation in practice (DiP) in ways that have enriched my understanding of graduate student populations and has, in turn, changed my approach to my own practice. The wealth of scholarly work concerning graduate student socialization, graduate programming, career development and choice among graduate students, and the CPED methodology have been immensely helpful in advancing my own knowledge of these subjects, and in showing me the ways in which my practice must evolve and improve. As someone who has spent the last roughly ten years working to, in small ways, improve graduate education, it has been gratifying to see that this traditionally underserved population is the focus of so many great minds. Before beginning my research for this DiP, I knew graduate - particularly doctoral - education needed to change; I was unprepared to learn just how drastic that shift needs to be.

Researching and writing this DiP has shown me the changes that need to be made; the challenges facing the implementation of those changes; and the benefits students could see via improved academic programming. As a practitioner, I am committed to finding ways to make positive changes to graduate education, and because of this DiP process, I have the knowledge base necessary to implement the most-needed improvements. In planning the evaluation process outlined in Manuscript 2 of this DiP, I had the opportunity to “gameplan” ways in which that process of change could begin, which moves me past a major hurdle that may otherwise have stopped me. And in this Manuscript 3, I was able to research, consider, and outline the most pressing issues and needs facing doctoral education, along with ways in which we may begin the revision and improvement process.
I have learned that I can leverage my role within this university to enact positive change for the benefit of students, and that those students may see their own paths improve drastically as a result. In serving students, I may be able to serve our larger community, and in some ways better higher education, in general. As a practitioner, that is what we should strive toward, and I am glad to have this DiP serve as the impetus for that.
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Figure 1. Conceptualizing Graduate and Professional Student Socialization (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 49)
Figure 2. Higher Education Students’ Professional Socialization (Sonnenschein et al., 2018, p. 1292)
Appendix B
Neutral facilitators will meet with individuals and groups in discussion-based interviews that will be led with these questions. Before beginning, facilitators will give a brief overview of socialization in this context, as well as a brief description of the evaluation goals and process.

Participants may answer these questions with as much or little detail as they wish. The facilitator will encourage participants to engage in conversation that arises from these questions.

*Likert-type scale responses based on Vagias (2006)*

**Student/Graduate Questions**

1a. Could you please describe your motivations surrounding your decision to begin your academic program?

1b. In what ways did those motivations change during your time in your academic program (if they did)?

2a. In terms of your academic and professional advancement, how influential would you rate the following: faculty, your peers, external person(s)/group(s)? Please rate using the following scale:

   1 – not at all influential
   2 – slightly influential
   3 – somewhat influential
   4 – very influential
   5 – extremely influential

2b. In your own words, explain your ratings.

3a. During your academic program, what level of importance do you feel was placed on career exploration? Please rate using the following scale:

   1 – Not at all important
   2 – Low importance
3 – Slightly important
4 – Neutral
5 – Moderately important
6 – Very important
7 – Extremely important

3b. Please give some examples of ways you feel your academic program supported or did not support your career exploration/development.

4a. Describe your career exploration/development activities.

4b. Were these program-sponsored or individual efforts?

5a. When entering the career field of your choice, or anticipating doing so, how prepared did/do you feel? Please rate using the following scale:

1 – not at all prepared
2 – slightly prepared
3 – somewhat prepared
4 – very prepared
5 – extremely prepared

5b. Please give some examples of ways in which you were prepared and ways in which you were underprepared.

6a. Describe the formal socialization you experienced during your academic program.

6b. How would you rate its impact? Please rate using the following scale:

1 – not at all impactful
2 – slightly impactful
3 – somewhat impactful
4 – very impactful
5 – extremely impactful

7a. Describe the informal socialization experiences you had during your academic program.

7b. How would you rate their impact? Please rate using the following scale:

1 – not at all impactful
2 – slightly impactful
3 – somewhat impactful
4 – very impactful
5 – extremely impactful

7c. How does that compare with the impacts of your formal socialization?

8. What formal socialization initiatives (that were not offered to you as a student) do you believe would be effective in your academic program?

9a. How would you rate your participation in the formal socialization efforts in your academic program?

1 – not at all involved
2 – slightly involved
3 – somewhat involved
4 – very involved
5 – extremely involved

9b. Please elaborate on your rating.

9c. (For students who selected 3 or below) Why do you feel you were uninvolved in your program’s formal socialization efforts?
9d. (For students who selected 4 or 5) What prompted your involvement in your program’s formal socialization efforts?

10a. How would you rate your participation in the informal socialization efforts in your academic program?

1 – not at all involved

2 – slightly involved

3 – somewhat involved

4 – very involved

5 – extremely involved

10b. Please elaborate on your rating.

10c. (For students who selected 3 or below) Why do you feel you were uninvolved in your program’s informal socialization efforts?

10d. (For students who selected 4 or 5) What prompted your involvement in your program’s informal socialization efforts?

11. (For students in a CPED-aligned program) What aspects of the CPED methodology would you describe as most impactful?

12. (For students in a CPED-aligned program) Do you believe that completing a CPED-aligned program has impacted/will impact your career success?

13. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today - or any question you think I should have asked but didn't?

References

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Graduate Enrollment Manager

University of Mississippi | School of Applied Sciences, Office of Graduate Student Success

January 2022 - Present

- Organize the graduate admissions and enrollment activities of five independent departments within the School of Applied Sciences
- Communicate with current and prospective applicants about admissions requirements and graduate programs and assist as needed during the application and admission process
- Assist in the planning, implementation, and execution of marketing and recruitment materials and strategies for graduate academic programs
- Work collaboratively with program faculty on course scheduling to ensure students can move through their programs in a timely manner
- Actively build and promote web-based communities to students in online graduate programs within the School of Applied Sciences to build a sense of belonging in the school and university
- Maintain lines of communication with program alumni to track graduate career placement and solicit programmatic feedback
- Serve as advisor for students in online graduate programs within the School of Applied Sciences
- Collaborate with applicable departments to ensure the successful admission and enrollment of students
- Monitor and ensure successful course registration for new and current students each term
- Design and manage internal systems for admissions tracking that are used by staff and faculty to make programmatic decisions each semester
- Manage the effectiveness of processes related to student applications, admissions, and enrollment; actively pursue ways to increase efficiency in these processes
- Assist with identifying graduate students eligible for financial aid, scholarships, stipends, and awards
- Determine and implement strategies for continuous improvement in the Office of Graduate Student Success
- Prepare reports needed to analyze effectiveness of procedures, marketing efforts and recruitment strategies
• Collect and analyze student and applicant demographic data to monitor and find ways to promote diversity and inclusion among graduate programs
• Track student progress through academic programs and ensure all necessary paperwork is completed
• Audit student records to ensure all program requirements have been met before graduation and assist the Graduate School with degree confirmation
• Assist program faculty with online and in-person orientation sessions for incoming students
• Assist program faculty with Graduate School forms and processes

Program Manager
June 2015 – January 2022
University of Mississippi | School of Education
• Organized the graduate admissions and enrollment activities of four independent departments within the School of Education
• Communicated with current and prospective applicants about admissions requirements and graduate programs and assisted as needed during the application and admission process
• Organized and presented recruitment programs, both in-person and online, for prospective graduate students; assisted the SOE admissions counselor with their recruitment activities
• Created and maintained comprehensive files for applicants and current students that meet requirements set by the university, state, and SOE accrediting bodies
• Designed and managed internal systems for admissions tracking that are used by SOE staff and faculty
• Designed and implemented orientation programs for incoming students
• Tracked student progress through academic programs and ensured all necessary paperwork was completed
• Audited student records to ensure all program requirements had been met before graduation and assisted the Graduate School with degree confirmation
• Assisted with School of Education assessment system data entry and reporting for national data reporting and accrediting agencies
• Supervised the work of graduate assistants

Administrative Secretary
August 2013 – June 2015
University of Mississippi | School of Music
• Acted as secretary for an independent department, with duties ranging from administrative tasks to complex projects requiring extensive preparation
• Created and maintained records for past, current, and prospective students
• Worked independently on various multifaceted projects as assigned by director
• Coordinated with other departments to work in the best interests of the department and its students
• Maintained a budget of over ten accounts, including scholarships and endowments
• Handled arrangements for travel, performances, and bookings for the department
• Supervised the schedules and work of graduate assistants and student workers
• Communicated with and assisted in the recruitment of prospective students

Admissions Specialist 
June 2012 – July 2013
University of Mississippi | Office of Admissions
• Followed state mandated guidelines in the admission of undergraduate students to the university
• Independently managed workflow to meet daily and weekly deadlines
• Maintained meticulous and confidential records of student data and paperwork
• Adhered to stringent and complex admissions procedures and guidelines
• Communicated with prospective students, their parents, and school counselors

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Instructor 
Fall Semester 2022
University of Mississippi | Department of Higher Education & Center for Student Success and First-Year Experience
EDHE 105: Freshman Year Experience is designed to help first-year students adjust to the university, develop a better understanding of the learning process, enhance their academic skills, acquire essential life skills to ensure their success, and to begin their exploration of the career and major that are best for them. The course also introduces students to the mission, values, and constituencies of a comprehensive public university, and to ethical and social concerns affecting its functioning. EDHE 105 is offered as a letter-graded, 3-hour elective credit course offered to all entering freshmen on the main Ole Miss campus in the fall semester only.
• Develop a semester curriculum suitable for 25 college freshmen based on a pre-set text, required special learning experiences, associated university events, and expected outcomes
• Prepare a course syllabus, schedule, assignments, exams, and class learning materials
• Deliver lectures on a wide range of topics, including university history, mission, and standards; student resources; effective study and test-taking techniques; life skills (budgeting, nutrition, planning/scheduling, etc.); diversity, equity, and inclusion; career exploration and planning; self-care; and student policies and discipline
• Monitor student progress through course; change instruction delivery methods as necessary to encourage and facilitate learning in all students
• Evaluate and grade students’ classwork, assignments, and papers; provide feedback as necessary to students who are performing below standard
• Initiate, facilitate, and moderate classroom discussions about a variety of topics, some of which can be sensitive for some students
• Maintain regularly scheduled office hours to advise and assist students
• Assist Center for Student Success and First-Year Experience with tracking freshman progress; monitor students for signs of maladjustment, social and academic issues, and other problems that may arise
• Act as a mentor and serve as a primary point of contact within the university for students; provide assistance, guidance, and encouragement as needed throughout the semester

**EDUCATION**

University of Mississippi | Doctor of Education in Higher Education | Expected May 2023
University of Mississippi | Master of Education in Higher Education | May 2020
University of Mississippi | Bachelor of Arts in English | August 2008