



10

“The Shoes Should No Longer Fit”: Creating a Space for Caring and Challenge Through the Dissertation Process

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Overview

Completing a doctoral program is a grueling experience under the best of conditions, but trying to do it while working full-time in an urban school district as a classroom teacher or administrator is especially challenging. In this chapter, we describe the experiences of six experienced educators who recently completed their Doctorate in Education at the University of Louisville, in the USA, and examine the ways in which the cohort model, peer mentoring, and supportive advising contributed to their success in the doctoral program.

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In today's world, there is a push for educational professionals to support individual career development by seeking advanced degrees, yet many individuals fail to complete these programs. In their literature review of peer mentoring for Doctorate in Education (EdD) programs, Lowery, Geesa, and McConnell (2018) discuss a student attrition rate for education doctoral students of 50–70%. They attributed these low rates of completion to (1) the challenge of balancing a doctoral-level program and full-time practitioner work within schools and (2) gaps that may exist between program curriculum and problem-based inquiries for students. Lowery et al. (2018) suggest that universities may encourage more promising completion rates by investing efforts in providing support for their intrinsically motivated students, such as cohort/peer mentoring. Part of the reason the cohort model works, is that each person brings individual passions and needs to the table in the company of other motivated practitioners. The doctoral journey is thus both an individual and a shared journey that leads to personal and collective success that can serve to validate the structure of the cohort model. The individual stories described here represent the lived experiences of professional educators as they sought to achieve their personal goals for degree attainment while being part of a supportive and caring community of learners. These experiences and the learning that has grown out of being a part of this program provide valuable insights for those leading professional doctoral programs and for potential students seeking guidance as they begin their own doctoral journeys.

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Starting the Doctoral Journey

My name is Dr. Dawn Roseberry. I am a counselor for Jefferson County Public Schools at Fern Creek High School. This marks my 25th year in education. Previously, I worked as a career planner for eight years. In this role, I was responsible for a caseload of students, taught pre-employment skills, and developed community partnerships to hire students. Following that role, I wrote a grant to fund a Youth Services Centre in the school. For the next 15 years, I was the Youth Services Centre Coordinator. I went back to school to get a second master's degree in school counseling. The principal then hired me as a school counselor, and I began my doctoral journey shortly after that. The cohort model empowered me each day to stay motivated and engaged in my quest to become Dr. Dawn Roseberry!

My name is Dr. Carlisha (Carla) Kent, and I am a first-year high school assistant principal at one of the largest high schools in the state. I moved to Louisville at the age of three where I would obtain my K-12 education, entered the military at 17, and worked as an accountant and human resources director. While climbing the corporate ladder, I was asked to teach college courses and found my passion for teaching. I made the bold, and terrifying, move to leave my position as a human resource director to become a public school teacher. After teaching for several years and through my infatuation and enthusiasm for learning, I jumped at the opportunity to apply for the educational leadership doctoral program. This is where my doctoral journey began.

My name is Dr. Sandra Hogue, and I am African-American educator with 25 years of experience with Jefferson County Public Schools. My current position is with central office as English/Language Arts instructional lead for Accelerated Improvement Schools where I am charged with advancing literacy instructional practices and student learning with the district's 35 elementary, middle, and high schools that are performing in the bottom 5% in the state. I was initially inspired to pursue this degree because I am a lifelong learner who is always seeking to hone my craft. However, immediately after beginning the journey in 2009, I discovered I was going to become a first-time mother. This life-changer

encouraged me to postpone the journey. Six years later, I began again, driven by the desire to ensure a safe and viable future for my two children. The realities of raising them in the USA are sometimes frightening. I feel compelled to ensure national and international employability for my family. The doctorate degree supports that employability.

I am Dr. Terra Greenwell and I am in my 11th year with Jefferson County Public Schools where I have served as teacher, department chair, instructional coach, assistant principal, and middle school principal. Principals need to continually refresh their pedagogical knowledge in order to lead, which is why pursuing a doctorate was the right challenge. Although this path was tedious, the most important aspect of the journey is realizing you cannot do it on your own, especially as a working mom. To finish in three years takes dedication while still balancing an often-challenging work and home life. The cohort model proved to be a life-saver and helped me meet deadlines and see it through to the end. The professor's willingness to devote time and the positive attitudes of the group are critical factors to success. Without this model, it is fair to say I may not be here today as Dr. Terra Greenwell.

I am Dr. Whitney M. Stewart and I had the distinction of being the youngest member of my cohort. Although I am not a Kentucky native, I attended Jefferson County Public Schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. Over the last 11 years, I have served as a substitute and classroom teacher and am currently employed as a college access resource teacher. I was motivated to enter the doctoral program for several reasons. First, I love learning and sought to challenge myself by researching and addressing disparities I observed in schools. Secondly, my father, and other colleagues, encouraged me to advance my skills as a practitioner. Lastly, I was often approached to lend my expertise and leadership in service to tasks beyond my scope of experience.

My name is Dr. Amanda Santos and I am in my tenth year as an educator and currently serving as academic instructional coach. During my first year, I was placed with a mentor teacher who supported and invested time in molding me into an effective teacher. From that point forward she was not only my mentor, but she became a dear friend and ultimately my principal. One day she approached me and said, "You need to complete your doctoral degree ... you would do awesome!" She saw my desire

to change the educational field for new teachers and believed in my ability to do so. By her mentoring me beyond my first year, along with my desire to continue learning, she helped me see that I was capable of greater accomplishments and pushed me to achieve more. From that point forward, my passion for mentorship fueled my desire to complete my doctoral work successfully in December 2018 and continue my work and leadership in mentoring within the district.

I’m Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller, a professor in the Educational Administration and Leadership program at the University of Louisville. I came to the University of Louisville three years ago, just one semester into the doctoral program for my co-authors. I teach our required Qualitative Research sequence, which affords me an opportunity to get to know all of the students in our program. I also commonly serve as dissertation advisor for those who decide to focus on qualitative research for their dissertations, which includes my co-authors, all of whom completed their doctoral degrees during the 2018–2019 academic year. When I received the call for proposals to contribute to this book on mentoring, I decided that this story really belongs to these incredible educators who continue to make such a profound, positive impact on the lives of children and families in our community and invited them to join me in this discussion of doctoral mentoring.

Development of the Cohort Model from the University Faculty Perspective

The EdD program at the University of Louisville is designed to support professionals from the Jefferson County Public School District in completing their doctoral degrees by offering them reduced tuition and a course schedule that accommodates their school district’s work day. The program is set up on a cohort model in which students are enrolled together in classes over the first two years of the program. Once they complete their classes and pass their comprehensive exams, however, there is no formal system that requires them to meet on a regular basis as they work on developing their dissertation proposals and moving forward

to conduct their research and complete their dissertations. Speaking as a faculty member, although I have only been at the university for three years, I have worked with doctoral students for over 20 years and have found that this is the period in which most students struggle to keep on track to completion, so I decided to create a regular time for my advisees to continue to meet while they are completing their degrees. These meetings, which are held off campus at a local coffee shop, include students at different stages of the dissertation process from those just starting to develop their proposals to soon-to-be graduates of the program. This enhances our already existing cohort model by providing opportunities for peer mentoring and mutual support.

Development of the Cohort Model from the Student Perspective

In recent years, there have been several research studies that have examined the ways in which the cohort model benefits learners and facilitates peer mentoring amongst students. According to Seifert and Mandzuk (2006), the cohort-based education model develops mutual intellectual stimulation, forms social ties, and enables institutions to organize the programs in effective ways. Nimer (2009) mentions that the cohort-based doctoral program offers its members both personal and professional support for academic interaction and degree completion. As doctoral graduates from a cohort model degree program, we believe that a cohort-based doctoral education facilitates peer mentoring amongst doctoral students. A cohort-based education program necessitates peer mentoring because students regularly interact and collaborate with one another throughout the pre-dissertation coursework. Cohort mentoring is “the most studied mentoring strategy in educational leadership doctoral programs and has been found to be particularly effective for scholar-practitioners” (Welton, Mansfield, Lee, & Young, 2015, p. 57). Welton et al. (2015) also state that the model “unceasingly supports educational processes and goals for doctoral students primarily, but can benefit academic mentors as well” (p. 57). All throughout the cohort model

coursework sequencing, doctoral students work together, check for understanding, share resources, collaborate, celebrate, and complain with classmates in one-on-one paired conversations, as well as in small and whole group discussions. Therefore, over the course of the pre-dissertation coursework, which typically lasts anywhere from one–three years, doctoral students in a cohort-based education program form strong social ties with peers that oftentimes extend into personal and professional support. Due to the design of the cohort model at the university, this personal and professional support happens so easily because all of the doctoral students work for the same school district, have similar roles, and may have worked together previously.

In a study conducted in South Africa focusing on doctoral learning (De Lange, Pillay, & Chikoko, 2011), there were three themes that emerged from participants in a cohort-based weekend model over three years. The findings indicate that the cohort model has great value in developing scholarship and reflective practice in candidates, in providing support and supervision, and in sustaining students toward the completion of their doctorates. In this study, data from the evaluation at the end of each seminar resulted in the emergence of the following three themes concerning doctoral support and supervision through the cohort model: supportive practice, reflective practice, and community of practice. Access to ongoing advising throughout the cohort model degree program for doctoral students is monumental in supporting doctoral students to successfully complete the dissertation process and persist to graduation.

When we started our doctoral program in the fall of 2015, we immediately knew we would need a method of communication to keep up with our assignments and class meeting sites. As working educational practitioners and full-time doctoral students, we took the initiative and created a contact list with each member’s first and last name, email address, and cell phone number. We shared this information with everyone via email after the first night of class. Quickly, we found that our simple email exchanges between 16 people made managing our email inbox quite difficult.

By the end of the first semester, one cohort member suggested we switch to the “GroupMe” application as a method of communication. In the GroupMe application, users are able to set up a group text message in

which they can text, add pictures and documents, respond to other users, create calendar events with reminders, and pose simple voting polls for group members. The GroupMe app is also accessible via desktop and iPad, which was especially convenient for our cohort members in their administrative work roles in which they might not have their cell phones on their person. The GroupMe app and email proved to be the most effective method of communication for our cohort as we matriculated through the doctoral program.

In the University of Louisville's EdD program, newly admitted doctoral students begin their academic programs in fall semester and matriculate through classes with peers admitted at the same time. Each cohort of doctoral students is named according to the year of their proposed graduation year. For example, our cohort, which began in the fall of 2015, was named Block 18, because our intended graduation year was 2018. The naming of each incoming doctoral class of students is truly significant. Just as K-12 educators name grade-level school teams and graduating classes, providing a unique identity for each incoming doctoral class of students creates a sense of belonging in your cohort family. Yes, you might enter the doctoral program as complete strangers working in a very large, urban school district. But once you are in the doctoral program, you are automatically adopted into a family through the cohort model. Doctoral students take the same classes at the same time with their cohort members. This cohort model provides doctoral students with an instant support system with other cohort members who also eventually become "accountability buddies" of a sort.

Naming each incoming doctoral class of students according to their anticipated graduation year is not only inspiring, but it is also prophetic. It is a constant reminder of each student's "why" and purpose for pursuing the doctorate. Every time we receive an email or are addressed formally by our professors, we are referred to as Block 18. The idea that we would be graduating in 2018 was never questioned or doubted. We knew we were on a time schedule that had a hard deadline of 2018. During our first semester, we were also treated with university "swag" gear. As part of our doctoral students' induction into the program, each cohort member received a pen, a coffee cup, and a sweater pullover from the university. Receiving swag gear was an outward manifestation to the world that we

were doctoral students at the university. This seemingly small gesture of gifting doctoral students with swag gear physically and psychologically unified our cohort.

During the first semester of our doctoral program, one of our professors intentionally and strategically introduced our cohort to another cohort. Our professor believed that one of the key ingredients to being a change agent was collaboration and allyship with other change agents and colleagues doing “the hard work” in K-12 education. Our professor often preached how “one cannot implement long-lasting, hard changes in culture and climate alone”. Instead, change happens in fellowship with others, both like-minded and those in opposition, incrementally.

Therefore, during one of our class sessions, our professor led our cohort, Block 18, into another classroom where we interrupted the lecture to introduce ourselves. As we stood there in front of the classroom like troubled students who had been called up to the board to solve the problem, we were center stage like a deer in headlights. There we were, us first-year, first-semester doctoral students in Block 18 face-to-face with the second-year, fourth-semester doctoral students of Block 17. These students had survived their first year of the doctoral program. They seemed confident in their interests and with the direction in which their research was heading. Block 17 seemed that much closer to their graduation date. In our eyes, their reality was a goal we hoped we would one day achieve.

That day in their class, we stood in the front and introduced ourselves, one by one, sharing our current job roles and our research interests, and then Block 17 did the same. As Block 17 shared, we listened intently, trying to hear possible references to our own research interests and panning the room for friendly faces to professionally network with within our school district. This introduction of Block 18 to Block 17 added a new extension to our doctoral family—elders with wisdom. In part, Block 17 was likened to older siblings in that they were “ahead” of Block 18, but unlike our professors, not so far removed from the doctoral experience. This introduction, which at first seemed like only as a casual meeting, proved to be so much more afterward. This introduction grew into what would later be friendly faces passing through the hallways of the university, to small talk conversations at district meetings and events.

Eventually, unbeknownst to us, this introduction would blossom into a combined summer course with both Block 17 and Block 18 students enrolled concurrently.

During our third semester as doctoral students, our first summer course consisted of two professors, one for Block 17 and one for Block 18, and three classroom spaces, one for each Block, as well as a shared, larger room for both Blocks combined. In our individual classrooms, our professors worked independently and taught separate content with different texts. When we, Block 18 and Block 17, met together during designated times in the shared space, magic happened. In the shared space, Block 17 and Block 18 students were gathered together and highly encouraged (read: forced) to mix and mingle with colleagues according to differences in Blocks and similarities in research, grade level, school type, and job roles. The blending of these two courses really added to our doctoral experience in that it provided peer-mentoring opportunities. In our new multi-Block groupings, we were able to discuss job roles, changes within the district, research sources, helpful tips, and tricks for successfully navigating the doctoral process. Research on the impact of peer mentors conducted by Geesa, Lowery, and McConnell (2018) concluded that mentees found it especially valuable to have mentors who had experienced the same doctoral program, taken the same classes, come from similar careers and family situations, and known firsthand the issues and stressors which the mentees were encountering. This summer course offered us these opportunities.

The Face of a New Cohort

In their study of faculty perceptions of the benefits and challenges of cohort models in education leadership programs, Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, and Norris (2000) found that most who were engaged in cohorts felt the advantages of the model outweigh the challenges and that while there are faculty and institutional benefits, the greatest benefactors are students. Two of the benefits to students include the bond of a social network and

the ability to gain and build on knowledge found in multiple perspectives (Barnett et al., 2000). Our cohort offered these social and academic benefits as well, yet as the coursework of our program came to an end, we were facing the uncharted territory of self-pacing. The journey's sprint to the finish line was ours to pursue or not. So, as we entered the potential wasteland of ABD (All But Dissertation) status, the fear was real.

After moving, sometimes literally, as a cohesive unit through the program to this point, we were suddenly thrust into what is traditionally a self-pacing, self-directing phase. We had heard, and were cautiously optimistic, about this stage. We were torn between beginning to feel that we could actually do it and the fear of falling short of completing the goal. The cohort had sustained us to this point, but it was time to find internal motivation to finish the not yet finished business. It was during this uncertainty that a new cohort emerged. It was one established and nurtured by Dr. Brydon-Miller. She values the shared learning found in reflecting on experiences accumulated by the group and used this belief to respond by structuring a new cohort experience to meet our personalized needs.

Setting the Tone

The cohort began to take shape on Tuesday afternoons at the local bakery where we would meet, debrief, and most importantly, stay on track. The atmosphere of the meetings was crucial. All too often in education, we are met by cold and sterile learning environments. The bakery offered us a place to take off our masks after work, and although we were working, we were able to shed some intensity and be with what soon became our new cohort family. Each family member was tied together by our chair or co-chair, Dr. Brydon-Miller. The format of our cohort meetings was relaxed, yet on track. We each were able to share the status of our work, gain insight from the members, vent if needed, and then move forward with a purpose. The pressure created by Institutional Review Board approvals or signatures required for study consent was lessened with the knowledge that we were all in the same boat.

Familial Support

The cohort model is a necessity for finding a work-life-dissertation balance. The majority of members were parents, spouses, and all were employed full-time in the local school district. Alternative forms of communications including social media, group chats, and text messages became required to keep up with the ever-increasing demands. Accommodation was key. Dr. Brydon-Miller set the tone by being an accessible and responsive mentor. Holmes, Birds, Seay, Smith, and Wilson (2010) discuss the tedious nature of the writing process through the metaphor of a mountain stating, “mountain climbers need a leader who is willing to give of their time and talents and who is able to lead with compassion and encouragement” (p. 6). There are plenty of professors who pride themselves on an austere persona, but when it comes to providing mentor support, the professor must be genial and obliging at times. Signing up to be a mentor may mean that the professor meets at odd times during the day, off campus, or even at the mentee’s place of work. The mentee in return must be able to set aside time on the weekends and plan out a timeline for advancing the progress.

Timeline and Tasks

Time is a significant factor in the success of mentee students and cohorts. As the cohort continued to meet and share progress over tea and bagels, it became obvious that some members were going to take off more quickly than others. This can be a potential set back in cohorts that are depending on each other to meet a deadline. The mentor’s role becomes crucial at this point, as they must now differentiate the support depending on the needs of the mentee. It is possible to break into even smaller cohorts that naturally form based on completion rates; however, all mentees can benefit from seeing each other work through the dissertation process at any stage. Timelines are not always provided by universities after the course work ends. The university relies on the students and the Dissertation Chair to plan out the trajectory of the defense. While the Chair may set the tone of the work, it is up to the student to design a timeline given the fact that cohort members use varied methodologies.

Embrace the Process

Embracing the spirit of continual learning and improvement is the key to doctoral success. Cohort models embody this spirit and help make the hills and valleys feel less uncertain. The group needs to go in with full knowledge of the all-consuming nature of dissertation work and the motivation to see it through. The cohort model provides a catch at times, but it is not a catch-all. The group provided the knowledge, skills, and out-of-the-box thinking, but “as in mountain climbing, one needed to know, and understand, where to climb, climbing preparation, specific techniques and utilization of the right tools” (Holmes et al., 2010, p. 6). The cohort and the mentor are there, but the mentee must be the one who sets the course. Setting attainable long- and short-term goals aids the process, but in the end, everyone in the group finds themselves on the defense stage on their own.

Leaning into the Finish Line

The reconfigured cohort featured doctoral candidates at varying points on the continuum that culminates with the completion of the program. There was great energy in working with those who have reached the milestones only steps ahead (although those steps were like long and arduous marathons at times) while also standing as a beacon for those who are a step or two behind you. We ranged from refining research questions and completing literature reviews in preparation for proposal defenses to preparing for or celebrating successful dissertation defenses. This range, unlike the lockstep of the cohort, was instrumental in helping us avoid a long-term ABD status. It was through hearing about journeys through an Institutional Review Board audit or feedback requiring yet another revision from others in this new cohort that gave us the insights we needed to face the next hurdle. We had moved from a marathon to a sprint, and in the sprint, we found comfort, certainty, uncertainty, and determination in both gazing upon the success of those ahead of us and reaching back to champion for those nearing the finish line steps behind us. That structure of our informal cohort that was curated and coached by Dr. Brydon-Miller also encouraged the benefits discussed in the research of

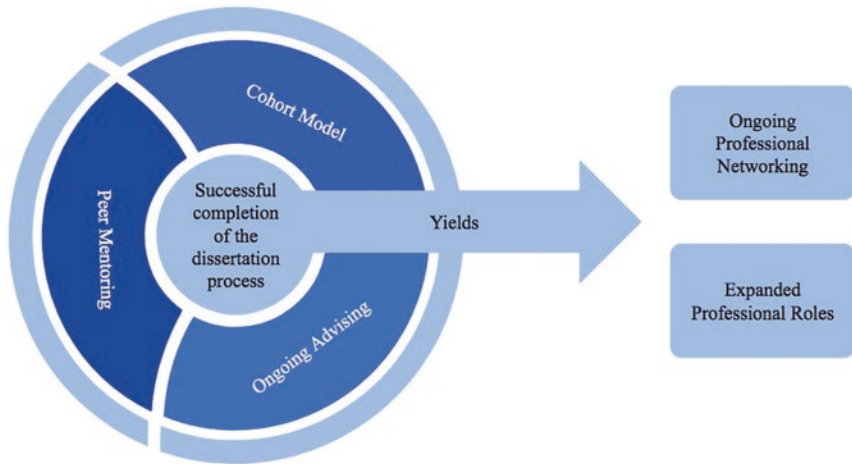


Fig. 10.1 The development of the cohort model

Barnett et al. (2000) as we learned from varied perspectives, not only in our research explorations but also in the perspectives from cohort members at varied point along the journey to the completion of the program.

In sum, the development of the cohort model from the student perspective can be visualized in Fig. 10.1. As explained from the student perspective, the core of successfully completing the dissertation process relies heavily on the development of the cohort model. The cohort model involves a continuous cycle of cohort model learning throughout, partnered with peer mentoring, and ongoing advising. This continuous cycle of the cohort model not only yields the successful completion of the dissertation but also spurs graduates forward into their future by providing ongoing professional networking and expanded professional roles.

The Shoes Should No Longer Fit

This title came to us during one of our initial conversations about this chapter and captures the sense we all felt after completing our degrees that we were ready to take on new professional challenges. Each of us has grown and taken on more advanced professional responsibilities within

the community and our school system. A few examples of our new endeavors are Dr. Stewart has started a new business entitled, “WM Stewart Consulting, LLC”. Dr. Greenwell was promoted from an assistant principal at a high school to principal at a middle school and spotlighted in “Louisville Business First 2019 Forty Under Forty Class”. Dr. Kent transferred schools and was promoted from a resource teacher to an assistant principal at a high school. Dr. Santos switched schools and was promoted from a teacher to a goal clarity coach and then to an academic instructional coach. Dr. Roseberry is now the freshman academy counselor and adjunct professor at Spalding University. Dr. Hogue was promoted from school coach to the district’s Accelerated Improvement Schools English/Language Arts instructional lead. And from my perspective as a mentor, seeing my former students take on critical new leadership roles within our district and continuing to draw upon the relationships forged through their doctoral program gives me a sense of hope for the future of education in our community. And these former students continue to contribute to our new doctoral cohorts by serving as external members on doctoral committees, giving guest lectures to new students, and encouraging students still in the program to continue their research and writing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are many benefits of the cohort model that are illustrated through the journey of these six individuals who successfully completed the dissertation process and who further found the mentoring support from faculty and peers crucial to their completion of the doctoral program. A number of studies have reported on the benefits of cohorts in enriching members’ learning experiences (Pemberton & Akkary, 2010). According to Barnett and Muse (1993), cohort students experienced improved academic performance related to enhanced feelings of support and connection, as well as increased exposure to diverse ideas and perspectives. Similarly, Bratlien, Genzer, Hoyle, and Oates (1992) noted that among cohort members, camaraderie lent “the support and motivation needed to strive and reach for higher expectations” (p. 87). Below are

recommendations to all stakeholders on how to support a cohort model, recommendations to faculty mentors, and recommendations to leaders on building stronger relationships between university and urban schools.

The first recommendation on how to support a cohort model starts with the identification and acknowledgment of the level of support needed. In this particular group most of the cohort members were non-traditional students with families, which caused additional barriers in their educational journey. Blackwell (1989) states that it is imperative to create a mentoring model that addresses the barriers to academic and professional success. Educational leaders must create the cohort model with support for both traditional and non-traditional students in mind. At the beginning of the cohort journey, some individuals struggled with the workload and complexities of a doctoral program while others felt more comfortable. Based on our experiences, support for the cohort model should entail looking at the timetable to ensure completion for all students is attainable, providing continuous feedback for all practitioners while in the process, and seeking input or improvements from stakeholders.

Based on the examples from this chapter, support could come in several forms such as meetings with faculty mentors outside of school including more informal check-ins, having a mentor who understands the needs of the mentees, and having mentors who are responsive to practitioners' needs. The faculty mentor is an integral part of the mentoring process as they are the ones with the expertise needed to ensure the practitioner finishes the dissertation race. All of the practitioners noted the bi-weekly meetings with the faculty mentor kept them on track and further allowed for the opportunity to answer questions after the completion of coursework. The practitioners found the connections made outside of the classroom beneficial to the relationship with the mentor and necessary to the completion of the doctoral program.

The last recommendation within higher education includes forging partnerships with local school districts. Developing cohorts of leaders within a single district will create highly effective, sustainable cohorts. Leaders within higher education need to visit the local school district and speak to teachers directly for feedback. The cohort develops amazing

leaders who then take their knowledge back into the same district investing within it. Mentoring within a cohort is a complex task and is ever changing due to the needs of a particular group or era of students. Head, Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall (1992) wrote that the “heart and soul” of mentoring grows out of “belief in the value and worth of people and an attitude toward education that focuses upon passing the torch to the next generation of teachers” (p. 5). This is the same for the cohort model: passing the torch from professor to cohort after cohort in order to lead the next generation of teachers and learners.

Points for Discussion

Graduate Students

- The mentor professor must be intentional when organizing the cohort, but the cohort’s success also depends on each member supporting the process. What roles are required in a cohort group to promote quality work?
- The dissertation journey can be difficult for full-time career students. How can graduate students make their work more meaningful and relevant?
- Considering a student’s aspirations, describe the impact a cohort model can have on students post-dissertation.

Mentor Professors

- In what ways might mentor professors provide support to non-traditional graduate students?
- How can mentor professors become immersed in the community in which their non-traditional graduate students are living and working to better understand their research?
- How might mentor professors help students grow outside of their comfort zone or find new “shoes” pre- and post-graduation?

University Program Directors

- When evaluating the path of coursework of a doctoral program, how can universities build in intentional mentoring and advising supports for students? Which points along the dissertation journey require the most mentoring and advising support?
- How might the university and program accommodate full-time career students?
- How can universities better support the mentor/mentee relationship?

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