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The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the socialization (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001) experiences of part-time doctoral students as a result of peer mentorship in one college. Part-time doctoral students are identified as students who are maintaining full-time employment or obligations outside of the university. The research questions for this study include: How do part-time doctoral students experience socialization through peer mentorship? How do part-time doctoral students experience spontaneous peer mentorship? How do part-time doctoral students experience peer mentorship as a result of their involvement in formal socialization experiences? How can the experiences of these part-time doctoral students be used to create implications for practice in the socialization by peer mentorship?

The 21 participants in this study were all enrolled in a large university at the time of the study. A composite description including themes of collegiality and isolation in the participants’ experiences with peer mentorship was developed. Participants experienced collegiality through nurturing mentoring, educative mentoring, dyadic co-mentoring with peers, workplace colleagues and personal friends who provided efficacious experiences as they negotiated their scholarly identity. Isolation includes feelings of being second-tier doctoral students and life getting in the way combined with feelings of negative self-efficacy as they negotiated their scholarly identity.
Interrelationships between the themes and subthemes are delineated. Implications for practice to encourage peer mentorship for part-time doctoral students were created. Suggestions are provided for both part-time doctoral students and their faculty in order to facilitate the process of socialization to the academy through peer mentorship.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Part-time doctoral students now comprise 65% of all doctoral students in colleges of education nationwide (Choy & Cataldi, 2006). In recent years, part-time education doctoral students have become the norm rather than the exception. For many years, part-time graduate students were considered inferior to their full-time counterparts (Conant, 1963; Glazer, 1986). This position is really more of an artifact of an elitist way of thinking about graduate degrees and how these degrees should be pursued (Pittman, 1997). In reality, the part-time doctoral student can succeed and find satisfaction in pursuing their degree if several important considerations are implemented to facilitate the process for what has been called “part-time learner/full-time leaders” (Erickson, Howard, Borland, & Baker, 2004). Appropriate socialization for these students is not a matter of radically changing the procedures required for part-time doctoral students to earn their degree, but rather a matter of changing the approach and being mindful of the needs of this group of students. One of these approaches includes encouraging teamwork among students so that they can be more effectively socialized to the academy. Peer mentorship may be one way to encourage the teamwork needed for the success of this group of part-time doctoral students.

Doctoral student attrition has been documented and continues to be around 50% (Ehrenberg & Kuh, 2009; Gardner, 2008; Lovitts, 2001) including all doctoral students, both full-time and part-time. However, evidence suggests students who are not appropriately socialized to the academy are much more likely to leave doctoral studies
(Lovitts, 2001). Full-time doctoral students experience the best progress towards completion of their doctoral degree, and having a mentor to facilitate academic process is critical (Ehrenberg & Kuh, 2009). Indeed, it has been suggested that the influence of peers in the process of doctoral studies may be more important than the influence of faculty (Gardner, 2008). Furthermore, Gardner suggested that potential for research on socialization of doctoral students may include “analyzing differences among demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age, enrollment status (emphasis added), and educational background” (p. 347) and how this will lead to a better understanding of the process of socialization in doctoral education.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994) is to understand the socialization experiences of part-time doctoral students as a result of peer mentorship in one college. Socialization is defined as the ability of the student to take on values of the academic community and to become familiar with the norms associated with the life of the scholar (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Part-time doctoral students in this case may be identified as students who are pursuing doctoral studies while maintaining full-time employment (or obligations) outside the university (Choy & Cataldi, 2006; Erickson et al., 2004). Peer mentorship includes mentorship by fellow doctoral students, colleagues, and friends while engaged in the process of doctoral study. The aim of this study is to understand socialization experiences of part-time doctoral students as a result of peer mentorship, in an effort to
develop implications for part-time doctoral students as they become socialized to the academy.

**Research Questions**

1. How do part-time doctoral students experience socialization through peer mentorship?
   
   a. How do part-time doctoral students experience spontaneous peer mentorship?
   
   b. How do part-time doctoral students experience peer mentorship as a result of their involvement in formal socialization experiences (i.e., Doctoral Student Forum organization)?

2. How can the experiences of these part-time doctoral students be used to create implications for practice in the socialization by peer mentorship?

**Theoretical Framework of Doctoral Student Socialization**

Many scholars report that doctoral students progress through a series of stages or phases in the process of becoming socialized to the life of a scholar (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Gardner, 2005; Golde, 1998; Grover, 2007; Weidman et al., 2001). When attempting to understand the experiences that these students have had, one must consider the lenses of their positions in the stages or phases of doctoral study. Doctoral students have unique experiences in the different phases of their program and therefore have different needs during the different phases.

I draw upon Weidman et al.’s (2001) theoretical framework for examining the socialization experiences of the participants. This framework emphasizes the peer culture
as one of the central components of socialization for graduate and professional students. Peer culture is considered important because it, along with the academic program (including faculty and the plan of study for the student), is the component of socialization on which the university has the most influence. Other components including personal communities, prospective students (including their backgrounds and predispositions and the affect they will have on their future peer community), and professional communities will play a dynamic and nonlinear role in shaping experience that differs for each individual student.

Overlapping with the Weidman et al. (2001) framework is the Higgins and Kram (2001) reconceptualization of mentoring at work and the importance of multiple individuals in the development of an individual within an organization. Much like Weidman et al. (2001) asserted, Higgins and Kram (2001) also have found that “individuals receive mentoring assistance from many people at any one point in time” (p. 264). This aligns well with the Weidman et al. (2001) doctoral student socialization framework that points to personal communities, professional communities, as well as prospective students playing a part in the socialization of the doctoral student. Multiple persons can influence the socialization as well as contribute to mentorship experiences of a doctoral student on his or her doctoral journey. This is especially true for part-time doctoral students because they find themselves deeply involved in work and social environments as well as doctoral study concurrently.

Much of the research on doctoral socialization is theoretical and does not address the actual lived experiences of the students (Gardner, 2005). Furthermore, part-time
students are not typically invited to participate in qualitative studies because they are
difficult to contact and have difficulty finding the time to engage in protracted qualitative
studies. This study attempts to understand the experiences of part-time doctoral students’
socialization experiences through peer mentorship.

Peer Mentorship and Doctoral Students

Fields (1998, p. 28) noted, “surviving Ph.D. programs requires someone who is
willing to show the way.” Furthermore, it has been noted previously that the influence of
peers may be one of the most important influences in the experience of a doctoral student
(Austin, 2002; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Gardner, 2008; Golde, 1998; Schein, 1968; Van
Maanen, 1978; Weidman et al., 2001). Doctoral student peers are in the unique position
to provide essential socialization experiences for one another. Anderson and Shannon
(1988) indicated that all mentorship activities include teaching, sponsoring, encouraging,
counseling, and befriending, built on the framework of the mentor dispositions. This
includes the mentor opening himself or herself, leading incrementally, as well as
expressing care and concern from the mentor to the protégé. Doctoral student peers are
able to provide support for one another and can provide mentorship that is significant in
the doctoral student journey.

Significance

Current scholarship suffers from a dearth of research on the socialization of
part-time doctoral students (Gardner & Gopaul, 2011). Furthermore, little research exists
on understanding the experiences and needs of part-time doctoral students, especially in
terms of informal or spontaneous peer mentorship (Mullen, 2003, 2006). Part-time
doctoral students typically have been marginalized and have experienced less academic success than their full-time counterparts (Erickson et al., 2004; Pittman, 1997). Indeed, much of the literature on the success of doctoral students involved in peer mentorship relationships is largely anecdotal and told from the perspective of personal experiences in the doctoral academic journey (Devenish et al., 2009; Gurvich, Carson, & Beale, 2008; Hadjioannou, Shelton, Fu, & Dhanarattigannon, 2007). Although the stories of peer mentorship and the effect it has on the success of the doctoral student are important, a study on the experiences of part-time doctoral students with peer mentorship is needed, especially in a time when a majority (65%) of education doctoral students are part-time (Choy & Cataldi, 2006). This is a gap in the literature this study aims to fill.

Gardner (2008, p. 347) suggested, “socialization models such as that of Weidman et al. (2001) require more empirical research in these multiple contexts to better understand the experience of all students in all contexts available.” This could include the context of peer mentorship of part-time doctoral students. Even though part-time doctoral students are typically difficult to locate and include in qualitative studies due to time constraints, it will be important in the future to include part-time doctoral students in the conversation about socialization and even more important to understand their experiences (Tinto, 1993). After all, as Pittman (1997) said, “whether a student attends full or part time does not determine the worth of a graduate degree. Full-time study is not inherently superior nor part-time by definition inferior” (p. 16). Therefore, an attempt to understand the experiences of the part-time doctoral student is important if these students are to be appropriately served.
The results of this study can potentially inform the creation of meaningful and appropriate educational experiences for part-time doctoral students. Not only will it be useful to develop implications for practice of peer mentorship experiences for part-time doctoral students, but it will also be useful in designing appropriate advising and improving the socialization these students experience. From a more practical position, this research potentially can be used to reduce the high student attrition rate from doctoral studies.

**Conceptual and Operational Definitions**

The key terms used throughout this study include the following: socialization of doctoral students, which is referred to simply as socialization; peer mentorship (including formal and informal or spontaneous); social networks theory; part-time doctoral students; professional identity; doctoral student identity and self-efficacy. These terms are used in a specific way throughout the text and are defined as follows.

**Socialization of Doctoral Students**

Graduate or doctoral student socialization is defined by Golde (1998) as “one in which a newcomer is made a member of a community—in the case of graduate students, the community of an academic department in a particular discipline” (p. 56). I also use this term to describe the activities that all doctoral students need to learn to begin their professional lives as a scholar including the following: working with collaborative groups in the academy or professional work environment, teaching, conducting research, writing for publication, presenting at conferences, and simply understanding the work that is required by one working in the academy or professional scholarly work environment.
Generally speaking, socialization is the cognitive and personal development of the student that allows them to be prepared to be successful in the work that they will be expected to perform in the future. In order to do this, the graduate student must become integrated into the academic department in which they have chosen to study (Herzig, 2002, 2004; Lovitts, 2001; Tinto, 1988). This includes successful interactions with both faculty and other students and often times, the process is defined in terms of stages or phases through which the doctoral student must progress (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Golde, 1998; Grover, 2007; Weidman et al., 2001).

**Peer Mentorship**

Mentoring is any relationship that develops between mentor and protégé or mentee. Peer mentoring can be described as “building a professional relationship between the mentor and the mentee over time, and consisting of nurturing, educative and protective elements” (Aston & Molassiotis, 2003, p. 203). For purposes of this study, peers are identified as fellow doctoral students, colleagues at work, and personal friends interacting within the process of doctoral study. These individuals provide the part-time doctoral student with important experiences in the process of developing a professional and/or doctoral student identity as well as emotional support. Part-time doctoral students are in the unique position of typically holding full-time employment or family obligations while engaging in doctoral studies. Furthermore, part-time doctoral students generally spend more time in work and social environments outside of campus than they do interacting with peers on campus. Therefore, part-time doctoral students tend to rely upon multiple individuals from within and outside of the university to provide mentorship.
throughout doctoral study; this is also consistent with social networks theory (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

**Formal Peer Mentorship in Graduate School**

In recent years, formal peer mentoring relationships (Mullen, 2006) are typically exemplified by the cohort strategy (Mullen, 2003; Twale & Kochan, 2000) established by the University with the intent to improve some facet of graduate study. This can include mentoring experienced by a student through participation in an official university organization like the College’s Doctoral Student Forum.

**Informal or Spontaneous Peer Mentorship in Graduate School**

Informal or spontaneous peer mentorship includes the impromptu grouping of students for the purpose of improving their experience in graduate school. These relationships “are not managed, structured or officially recognized” (Mullen, 2006, p. 88) by the University. Part-time doctoral students experience informal or spontaneous peer mentorship from other doctoral students as well as from colleagues in the workplace and personal friends.

**Social Networks Theory**

Social networks theory provides a lens to view mentorship activities for an individual as emerging from networks of significant “developers” (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 269) who may be persons from within and outside of the organization which a person finds themselves affiliated. This may include “senior colleagues, peers, family, and community members” (p. 264) who provide mentorship and personal learning opportunities for the protégé. For doctoral students, this may include workplace
colleagues, personal friends, as well as doctoral student peers (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Sweitzer, 2009). This study does not consider the impact of family mentorship (including spouses) on the part-time doctoral student.

**Part-Time Doctoral Students**

Part-time doctoral students are defined for purposes of this study as students who are enrolled in the doctoral program, but concurrently hold employment (or family obligations) outside of the university, which can be defined as full-time. Participants selected for this study are employed full-time as teachers (or parents), administrators, or within another professional career outside of the university and normally consider their graduate studies as a part-time or as a secondary venture to their current career or family obligations. Hours of enrollment at the University were not considered as the operational definition of part-time students for purposes of this study because some part-time doctoral students may be enrolled at different phases of doctoral studies as full-time students (e.g., students in dissertation phase or students in coursework phase taking an overload of coursework in a given semester).

**Professional Identity**

Professional identity includes “attempts to relate the self and its workings to an ongoing social structure” (Becker & Carper, 1956, p. 341). This may include development of identification with work or profession including the title, tasks, organization, and significance in society. For purposes of this study, professional identity primarily includes development of doctoral student identity. However, some tensions do
exist between development of doctoral student identity and previously held professional identity that exist for participants in this study.

**Doctoral Student Identity**

Doctoral student identity is the “endeavouring to develop another identity (that of scholar) within a chosen field (a particular proximal and extended disciplinary community) as they enter into, learn and use the particular discourse(s) and habits of mind of the group” (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009, p. 112). This process of change in identity may differ from the professional identity (Colbeck, 2008) a doctoral student has already embraced in their concurrent profession, especially for part-time doctoral students.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is defined as a person’s “beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994, p. 71). In other words, self-efficacy is one’s belief in their personal success in a given situation. For doctoral students, this will include the belief they can succeed throughout the course of doctoral studies. Bandura (1993, 1994) indicates self-efficacy beliefs function through four major processes: cognitive (thinking processes), affective (emotional states), motivational, and selection processes. For doctoral students, cognitive and affective processes can be used to describe the outcomes of peer mentorship and the impacts these experiences have on their doctoral studies.
Situating Self

In this section, I relate a story of my experience with peer mentorship because I believe it has been critical to my success in graduate school. Furthermore, I tell my story in an attempt to situate my “prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Describing my doctoral student experience with peer mentorship and how it has impacted my socialization is an attempt to “bracket” the experience (Aitchison & Lee, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994, p. 85) as a part of this phenomenological study in order to situate my experiences and put my thinking about other doctoral students in perspective. This allows me to better understand my research participants’ experiences (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Although simply telling my story does not set aside my bias, it does provide me with a focal point from which I can view the experiences of participants in the study. I believe, when considering myself as “researcher as instrument” (Eisner, 1981, 1991), I must understand my own experiences before I attempt to understand other’s experiences. Setting aside my experience is never completely possible as a researcher (Creswell, 2007). However, I believe that I must unpack my experiences so “the world in the bracket has been cleared of ordinary thought and is present before us as a phenomenon to be gazed upon, to be known naively and freshly through a ‘purified’ consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85).

My Story

I began my doctoral studies in the fall of 2006. When I came to campus on that first day of classes in late August, I was filled with anticipation and excitement for the days to come. However, I was also teaching science full-time at a small, public high
school located more than 50 miles from campus. I knew that my experience would not be the typical full-time doctoral student experience because I was to be enrolled as a part-time doctoral student. Also, I was fully dedicated to my career as a science teacher and wished to continue to provide excellent instruction and service to the district in which I was teaching while pursuing doctoral studies. Furthermore, I had not taken courses in a college of education since my undergraduate experience, 13 years earlier.

My first semester as a doctoral student was filled with stress and anxiety, punctuated by periods of euphoria and a distinct sense of accomplishment. I remember wondering how I would complete the copious amounts of reading and work through the statistical problems that I needed to solve. I looked to my peers for help with understanding the reading and statistics but many of them were master’s students, and did not fully comprehend what it meant to be a doctoral student. My colleagues at the high school where I teach were in awe of my intentions to complete a Ph.D., and the building principal at the high school where I teach was ambivalent. My husband provided continual support in my first semester as well as throughout my doctoral studies. He encouraged me to continue working hard, even when the hours were long. He wanted me to be successful in my doctoral studies and would listen with understanding when I was overworked and stressed out. He continues to give me meaningful support towards this complicated and time-consuming goal.

I was surprised by the many details I learned about life as a doctoral student during my first semester. There are many things that I felt I should have known about the University and its procedures, and at times I felt overwhelmed. For example, I did not
understanding the parking procedures, the email system, or how to find things I needed in the library. However, as time went by, I did learn what I needed to know about how to find what I needed and to function within the bureaucracy of the University.

I was excited when I was invited by other doctoral students in EHHS at Kent State University to attend a day long retreat specifically for doctoral students in late September during my first semester. I knew that I needed to affiliate myself with a peer group if I was to stay the course and complete my doctorate. They asked me if I would take a leadership position in this organization referred to as the “Doctoral Student Forum” and informally called the Doc Forum. I felt that I could not take on any other responsibilities, especially a leadership position with a group that I would most likely not have time to be involved with, to any extent. However, the group was supportive and I attended the retreat and wished to continue my affiliation with this group of doctoral students who seemed to understand the anxiety, but also the excitement involved in working towards the doctorate. In some way, I understood the experiences I would be immersed in as a leader of this student organization would enable me to become socialized in ways that I could not even fathom at that time. I now consider my experience and the peer mentorship I have had as a coordinator of this group to be most significant in my socialization to the academy.

My Experience With Peer Mentorship

Throughout my first academic year of my doctoral coursework, I attended the sessions of the Doc Forum and treasured the time I had to be in conversation with this
supportive peer group. Two of the doctoral students that I most appreciated were Peter and Donna (Note: all my peers are identified by pseudonyms).

Peter was a science education doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction. Donna was not only a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction, but also held a position as a secretary in the department. Peter and Donna provided support throughout my first year of doctoral studies I considered critical to my success. They provided me with guidance and support, and they listened to my concerns and anxiety and responded with complete understanding. They even provided critical advice that made the process of doctoral studies seem less daunting. I contacted them regularly via email to get answers to my questions and to find out what I should be doing in the early stages of my first academic year to ensure success for the future. Peter and Donna were both working full-time and they understood the experiences I was having and provided me with information that would reduce the squandering of my precious time. I may not be writing these words today if it had not been for the valuable peer mentorship that both Peter and Donna provided in those early days of my doctoral studies.

As time went on, Peter and Donna began to work on their dissertations and I saw less and less of them; I found it difficult to move on without the guidance these two individuals had provided. However, as a result of my commitment to attending sessions of the Doc Forum, they invited me to take over the leadership of the group. Another doctoral student, Susan, agreed to join me in leading the Doc Forum. We both agreed with some hesitation, but we did so with hope for the future of the Doc Forum. Susan and I worked on “co-coordinating” the Doc Forum for the next two academic years. Susan
was my friend and mentor in every possible way. She provided guidance on a personal level, but also allowed me to recognize my greater potential for leadership in an academic environment. In the two short years that I had the pleasure to work with Susan, we were able to coordinate 11 monthly sessions as well as 2 day-long retreats. In addition, Susan and I took the experiences we had with this student organization to a statewide graduate student conference and presented this work to a lively group of participants.

Later, with the help of our faculty advisor and another student, we were able to write an article to be submitted and eventually published in a national refereed journal. The work that I have done with Susan and the Doc Forum has provided me with invaluable leadership experience. I feel fortunate to have worked with a peer who was further along in her doctoral studies. Susan is not only an honored friend, but also one I can call upon for future collaborations.

As Susan neared graduation, I was fortunate to find another student, Kristina, who was willing and able to join me in co-coordinating the Doc Forum. Kristina had been a classmate in my qualitative research methods course and I had much anxiety when I asked her to join me in coordinating the Doc Forum. She is substantially younger than me and I did not know her very well before I asked her to work with me. However, much like Susan, Kristina helped to identify the needs of the doctoral students who were participants in the student organization. Kristina pushed my thinking and made me realize there may be experiences we could facilitate for the doctoral students via the Doc Forum that would provide them with valuable socialization experiences. Although Kristina was in the early reaches of her doctoral journey, she helped me to recognize the
needs of others and to see things from a different perspective. I am fortunate to have made contact with Kristina and to have had the opportunity to learn from her keen mind and insight. In more recent days, Kristina and I invited three other doctoral students to “co-coordinate” the EHHS Doctoral Student Forum with us. As a result of this, we have learned more about the benefits and challenges of engaging in collaborative work and the strength we gain in working closely with others. I believe this is a skill that will serve me well in my future academic career.

I feel I have learned three things as a result of the peer mentorship I have had and as a result of my leadership position with the Doc Forum. First, I believe that in an effort to help others, I have helped myself. As I planned the activities of this student organization, both with Susan and Kristina as well as others, I realize that I have learned more from them than I believed to be possible. They provided suggestions for improving Doc Forum sessions and upcoming events but also listened when I most needed support. Second, I believe that through the work I have done with the Doc Forum, I have made connections with the University community in a way that is not and cannot be possible for many part-time doctoral students. If I had just continued to take classes without thinking beyond my own limited experience, I believe I would have missed one of the most important lessons of doctoral education: to develop collaborative relationships that continue beyond the scope of the typical semester of graduate school. Finally, and most important, in my effort to make a difference in other students’ lives through the Doc Forum, I believe that I have made my persistence as a doctoral student possible. After
all, I believe it is not just the courses in graduate school that make a difference but the relationships forged that will have an impact on the life of the emerging scholar.

**Summary**

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative inquiry is to understand the socialization experiences through peer mentorship for part-time education doctoral students. I began this inquiry with an introduction to pertinent literature as well as my experience related to being a part-time doctoral student and the experience I have had with peer mentorship towards my personal socialization. I utilized phenomenological research methods to get to the essence of the part-time doctoral student’s experience with peer mentorship towards their socialization (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Literature on the topics of doctoral student socialization, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral students were reviewed. This literature served as framework in which to situate this study. The results of this study will serve to generate theory on how to improve the experiences for part-time education doctoral students through peer mentorship. This will allow these students to be better prepared for their future as scholars, either in academic or professional work environments.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature pertinent to this study is reviewed in this chapter. Literature on the topics of socialization of doctoral students, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral students is presented. The literature on the socialization of doctoral students selected for this literature review was chosen from a larger body of literature that includes general academic socialization. Literature on socialization has been chosen for this study that directly addresses graduate or doctoral students. Next, in this chapter, I review literature on peer mentorship among graduate or doctoral students. Finally, I present the literature that provides a discourse on the part-time graduate and doctoral student experience. I also provide implications of this research, as well as identify gaps in the literature.

Socialization

Introduction to the Concept of Academic Socialization

Socialization in an academic setting was first described as the process whereby an individual “takes on the values of the non-membership group to which they aspire” (Merton, 1957, p. 265). More simply put, “socialization is the process through which an individual becomes a part of a group, organization, or community” (Austin, 2002, p. 96). This applies to doctoral students because in many ways, appropriate socialization is perhaps the most important process that a student must undergo in their education. Graduate student socialization has been defined as “one in which a newcomer is made a member of a community—in the case of graduate students, the community of an
academic department in a particular discipline” (Golde, 1998, p. 56). Many doctoral students are not able to integrate themselves into the academy and may become part of the estimated 50% attrition rate (Ehrenberg & Kuh, 2009; Gardner, 2008; Lovitts, 2001). This is a statistic that is not a recent phenomenon. This high rate of doctoral student attrition was originally documented in 1960 and appears to have remained constant in recent days (Berelson, 1960; Gardner, 2008; Katz & Hartnett, 1976; Nettles & Millett, 2006). The high attrition rate for doctoral students has been tied to the lack of socialization to the academy (Bair & Haworth, 2004; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles & Millett, 2006).

**Theoretical Frameworks of Socialization of Doctoral Students**

Numerous frameworks have been suggested to understand the process of socialization; these are important to consider as the historic background in the understanding of doctoral student socialization. Much of the contemporary understanding of academic cultural socialization can be traced to the seminal work of Robert K. Merton and colleagues in an attempt to understand the experiences of the medical student in becoming acculturated to the medical profession (Merton, 1957; Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957). This work has been expanded upon to better understand the nature of doctoral student socialization. As a result of their work, a basic definition was developed for this process of socialization as “combining its component knowledge and skills, attitudes, and values, as to be motivated and able to perform this role in a professionally and socially acceptable fashion” (Merton et al., 1957, p. 41).
The process of socialization to the academy is essential for every doctoral student. Several theoretical frameworks of socialization have been proposed to describe the general process of socialization of students in higher education (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Austin, 2002; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Golde, 1998; Grover, 2007; Rosen & Bates, 1967; Weidman et al., 2001). A comparison of these frameworks is useful in an effort to find similarities as well as differences in order to understand the theoretical process of socialization. See Table 1 for a summary of theoretical socialization frameworks.

Rosen and Bates (1967) presented a theoretical framework of socialization which represents the traditional master-apprentice system. Their idea conceives of the student as the neophyte and the graduate faculty as the agent of socialization. In this way, the student is seen as recipient of knowledge that comes down from the professor and that this must be incorporated into their understanding of what it means to be successful in the academy. In their words, “the agent is the giver of knowledge; the neophyte is the receiver” (p. 75). Indeed, the faculty adviser continues to be a major agent for graduate student socialization (Duffy, 1986; Grover & Malhotra, 2003; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles & Millett, 2006). Rosen and Bates (1967) provided some hints of the influence that the peers of the student will have in their socialization, but for the most part, it was not viewed as an important agent in the overall socialization of the graduate student. This seminal piece on the socialization of graduate students does not address the multiple variables, which graduate students must contend with in their experience, especially for the part-time graduate student who will have multiple commitments outside of their graduate student experience.
Table 1

**Summary of Theoretical Socialization Frameworks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Major Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merton et al. (1957)</td>
<td>Theoretical, student physicians</td>
<td>Knowledge, skills, attitude, values combine in the developing student as they transition to professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosen &amp; Bates (1967)</td>
<td>Theoretical, graduate students</td>
<td>Faculty adviser is the main agent of socialization for graduate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bragg (1976)</td>
<td>Theoretical, higher education</td>
<td>Socialization is the sum result of all interactions in the academy; includes peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baird (1992)</td>
<td>Theoretical, based on empirical study with doctoral students</td>
<td>Increasing stages of doctoral study causes changes in interactions with faculty, adviser and peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golde (1998)</td>
<td>Theoretical, based on empirical study with doctoral students</td>
<td>Four tasks must be completed by all doctoral students in the process of socialization (cognitive, everyday tasks, professional, integration to the department).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weidman, Twale, &amp; Stein (2001)*</td>
<td>Theoretical, doctoral and professional students (graduate students)</td>
<td>Nonlinear and dynamic stages of graduate student socialization, involves multiple interactions from within and outside of the university setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin (2002)</td>
<td>Theoretical, based on empirical study with graduate students</td>
<td>Nonlinear socialization of graduate students involves multiple interactions in and out of the University setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali &amp; Kohun (2007)</td>
<td>Theoretical, based on literature review of doctoral students</td>
<td>Four stages of doctoral socialization, aims to reduce social isolation and attrition at different stages of student experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grover (2007)</td>
<td>Theoretical, based on authors experiences advising doctoral students</td>
<td>Four stages of doctoral study identified, aims to identify and reduce mistakes made in different stages of doctoral study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Research indicated in chronological order as presented in the literature review.

*Primary framework in which to situate this study.*
Bragg’s (1976) theoretical conception of student socialization in undergraduate education identifies five steps through which all students must progress. Even though this publication discusses undergraduate students, it has been included here because it is often cited in the literature as the basis for understanding graduate or doctoral student socialization. She continued to draw on the work of Merton and others (Bloom, 1963; Merton et al., 1957; Rosen & Bates, 1967; Schein, 1968) to describe socialization as the sum result of all interactions that a student experiences while in the academy. She defined socialization 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” (Bragg, 1976, p. 6). This includes the “peer culture” in graduate school (Schein, 1968). Not only do peers appear to be an important agent of socialization for graduate students but it has been written “graduate students are often said to learn more from one another than from the faculty” (Van Maanen, 1978, p. 25). Bragg’s (1976) five steps of socialization include the following: (a) observation of the role model(s) behavior; (b) imitation of the role model(s) behavior; (c) feedback on the behavior practiced; (d) modification of the behavior; and (e) internalization of the role model’s values. This discussion about student socialization in higher education includes the peer network as an important socializing force for the beginning student. She contended that more experienced students can serve as role models to the less experienced. This is the first piece of literature that places a premium on the role of peers in the socialization process in higher education.
Baird (1992) placed doctoral students in three categories based on their position in the process of their education. In his study, he identified students as being either in the beginning, mid-course, or advanced, based on their completion of coursework and/or dissertation. Although this is an empirical survey of doctoral students, Baird based his three categories on the theoretical framework that students who are further along in the process of socialization will also be further along in the process of their program. Students who are advanced or dissertating have more access to faculty, have better relationships with their advisor, and also have greater involvement with their peers. Tinto (1993) stated: “Insofar as the students’ academic and social communities are localized within the department, interactions within them tend to become intertwined. Social experiences become part of one’s academic experiences and vice versa” (p. 236). Generally speaking, there are characteristic intellectual and interpersonal demands at the different points in one’s doctoral experience. This is the first study that validates the theoretical construct of the socialization of doctoral students as proceeding through phases where experiences in each phase leads to the socialization of the emerging scholar.

Golde (1998) envisioned a framework of doctoral socialization process as “four general tasks of transition” (p. 56). The first task is the ability to master the content of the chosen field. This cognitive task can involve formal coursework but may also include laboratory or field work. The second task includes living the everyday life as a graduate student, including all the struggles necessary to complete the work. The third task is learning about the profession that the student will eventually practice. The fourth and
final task is the assimilation of self into the department of chosen study, including interactions with faculty, staff, and peers. The description of the interactions between the many variables with which a doctoral student must contend is made clear in this piece, and in essence is building on previous work (Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Rosen & Bates, 1967).

Weidman et al. (2001) more specifically apply the theoretical socialization process to graduate and professional students and have delineated four nonlinear and dynamic stages through which all students must pass. These stages, previously identified by Thornton and Nardi (1975) in their description of role acquisition in social settings in general, include the anticipatory, formal, informal, and finally the personal. In the anticipatory stage, the student becomes aware of the appropriate behaviors, attitudes, and cognitive expectations in the role of the graduate or professional student. In the formal stage, the student receives formal instruction in the cognitive aspects of the chosen discipline. In the informal stage, the student learns of the informal role expectations from both faculty as well as peers. Finally in the personal stage, the appropriate role of the individual becomes internalized as a result of the fusing of the individual role to the social structure. Not only do these stages of socialization exist in graduate and professional socialization, but there are also core elements that are embedded within the stages including knowledge acquisition, investment, involvement, as well as the nature of identity and commitment. Each of these core elements are manifested differently in the different stages of socialization (Weidman et al., 2001). This is an important framework for purposes of the present study because this is the most accepted theoretical framework
of graduate student socialization. Also, it includes numerous variables, including the influence of doctoral student peers on the student as they move through their course of study.

Austin (2002), like Weidman et al. (2001), recognized that socialization of doctoral students takes place in a non-linear fashion and is very much shaped by multiple factors. This process, not designated as a stage-like sequence, involves the following: observing, listening and interacting with faculty, interacting with peers as well as from personal relationships with family and friends outside the university setting. Taken together, the Austin (2002) and Weidman et al. (2001) theoretical framework of doctoral socialization are the only models that consider persons outside of the university as being important agents of doctoral student socialization.

Ali and Kohun (2007) provided a theoretical four-stage discussion of socialization aimed at reducing social isolation in the doctoral student experience in order to minimize attrition. These researchers developed a theoretical framework that identifies the cause of social isolation and the remedies to social isolation that exist in the different stages of a student’s doctoral program. These stages coincide with the chronological position of one’s doctoral program. The stages are as follows: Stage I is the preadmission to enrollment stage, Stage II is the first year of the program, Stage III is the second year through candidacy, and Stage IV is the dissertation stage. The researchers recognize that there are different challenges in the different stages of the process and that it is important to create socialization potential differently for students in the different phases of the academic program. For example, in Stage I students may feel less socially isolated if
they are provided with orientations to faculty as well as other students, whereas in Stage IV students will feel less socially isolated if they have opportunities to meet with other students and their committee to discuss writing issues.

Grover (2007) presented a four-stage model of maturity in the growth of the doctoral student. This model intends to address the “mistakes” that many doctoral students make as they become socialized in order for them to reduce the impact of these mistakes on their future. The stages are comparable to the four years of study for the average student. They include: The Stage of Exploration, The Stage of Engagement, The Stage of Consolidation, and The Stage of Entry. Common mistakes are identified in each of the stages and remedies are suggested which oftentimes involve working more closely with committees or collaborating on work with fellow students. Taken together, the Ali and Kohun (2007) and Grover (2007) model moves beyond identification of the stages of doctoral study and begins discussion of how to ensure success for students in each stage. This is critical because much remains to be studied on how doctoral students can be encouraged to persist and succeed in their courses of study. Of particular interest for this dissertation is the identification of the affect of peer mentorship and how this contributes specifically to the socialization of part-time doctoral students.

Identification of some common threads between all these theoretical frameworks of doctoral student socialization is needed. First, all of the frameworks identify the advisor or faculty as being critical agents of socialization for doctoral students (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Austin, 2002; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Golde, 1998; Grover, 2007; Rosen & Bates, 1967; Weidman et al., 2001). Second, all the frameworks, except Rosen and
Bates (1967), take into consideration the major impact that peer interaction will have on the socialization of the doctoral student. Many of the frameworks suggest chronological stages or phases through which all doctoral students will progress (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Golde, 1998; Grover, 2007; Weidman et al., 2001). Taken together, the commonalities of these frameworks include the faculty adviser as the most important, followed by the peers of the student, and the fact that all students tend to move through a stage-like process of socialization.

Recognition of some differences among the theoretical frameworks for doctoral student socialization is essential. Most notably, only two scholars suggest that students experience socialization from outside the university (Austin, 2002; Weidman et al., 2001). Austin’s (2002, p. 101) idea came from the students who were part of “a four-year, longitudinal qualitative study that followed a sample of graduate students who aspired to the professoriate and who held teaching assistantships at the start of their graduate programs.” When students in the study were asked about their graduate school experience, some of the students recognized the importance of friends, spouses, parents, and other family in their graduate school experience. Indeed, these individuals from outside the university were the “primary referent group” for the graduate student and were believed to be very important to their socialization (Austin, 2002, p. 105). The Austin study, like the Weidman et al. (2001) theoretical framework, was created out of the need to incorporate a “more unique, individualistic, and reflective of the diverse nature of the more recent incumbents to academic and professional roles as well as the changing environments affecting them” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 25).
Another difference among the frameworks is that in recent years, the process of socialization is viewed as a vehicle by which students’ graduate school experiences can be improved upon. Recognition of socialization as a process is a salient theme of the research; it is also necessary to acknowledge the need to channel this process in order to improve graduate student experience in an effort to ensure student success (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Austin, 2002; Grover, 2007; Weidman et al., 2001) and ultimately to reduce the high rate of attrition.

**Weidman, Twale, and Stein Theoretical Framework of Doctoral Student Socialization**

Many of the earlier models (as described in Weidman et al., 2001) or descriptions of doctoral student socialization were linear. These linear theoretical models (i.e., Bragg, 1976; Thornton & Nardi, 1975) were later criticized because they ignored student perceptions and individual differences like gender, race, and religion; they discounted change in student perspective over time, and assumed that all students are the same (Antony & Taylor, 2004; Tierney, 1997). The current thinking about graduate and professional student socialization comes from Weidman et al. (2001).

The Weidman et al. (2001) framework (see Figure 1) “illustrates the nonlinear, dynamic nature of professional socialization and the elements that promote identity with and commitment to professional roles” (p. 37). In the middle, the institutional culture is situated including the academic program (including faculty and the plan of study for the student) as well as peer climate. Next to this is the socialization processes including interaction, integration, and learning with the core elements of knowledge acquisition,

investment, and involvement below. This would traditionally be viewed as the part of the socialization process that the institution has most control. All other contributing factors are situated around this center as concentric ellipses because these factors will interact uniquely in a nonlinear and interactive fashion for each individual student. The ellipse to the left includes the sum total of the background of each prospective student including previous education ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation. The predisposition of
the prospective student includes values, career aspirations, learning styles, and beliefs that the student brings to their experience.

The ellipse on the bottom includes the personal communities that the graduate or professional student experiences concurrently with their academic experience. These variables like spouses, children, and other family members can either encourage or take away from their scholarly endeavor. This ellipse also takes into consideration any commitment to a work environment (employers) generally outside of the university in which the graduate student may be engaged during their academic program. This may be full-time or part-time employment because this can affect the graduate experience.

The ellipse on the top refers to the professional community that the graduate student will take their place in following their graduate or professional education. This will include practitioners that the student observes while working towards their degree as well as any professional organizations to which they will be accountable.

The ellipse on the right represents the “primary outcome of the professional socialization process” (p. 39) or the novice professional. This is the standard that the graduate student works towards as they are socialized in graduate school and the standard to which they will be committed to and find identity.

Each of the ellipses is shown as a dashed line because the movement in and out of the different conceptual zones of socialization is fluid and these elements are mutually dependent upon one another. Furthermore, the interactive stages listed at the bottom of the diagram including anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal all can be present at any point in the socialization of the graduate or professional student. Therefore, these
“stages” are not chronological but interactive in nature because “socialization is dynamic and ongoing, without a definite beginning or end” (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 40).

This framework for conceptualizing graduate and professional student socialization (Weidman et al., 2001) provides an excellent theoretical framework in which to situate the present study. The framework is useful because it takes into consideration the whole experience of the doctoral student, including professional communities, personal communities, as well as the effect that prospective students as well as novice professional practitioners will have on the student. At the heart of this framework is the academic program and peer climate. Peer climate has been recognized by many scholars as critical to the success of the doctoral student; however, what this really looks like and how students interact with peers in multiple situations is missing.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the impact of peer mentorship on doctoral student socialization, and specifically in regards to part-time doctoral students. The Weidman et al. framework only hints at what this will look like because it was created with the entire socialization process in mind. In this study, I intend to delve into more depth on influence of peers on the doctoral student and how this facilitates socialization. Weidman et al. were concerned with a bigger picture of socialization whereas the intention of this study is to focus specifically on the experiences part-time doctoral students have with their peers and how this facilitates socialization.

**Studies Conducted on Doctoral Student Socialization**

The early scholarship on doctoral education mainly addressed the high attrition rate for doctoral students (Berelson, 1960; Katz & Hartnett, 1976; Tucker, Gottlieb, &
Pease, 1964). Little attention had been paid to the experiences of students and how this translated into success or failure prior to 1960. Many of the more recent studies have attempted to pin-point the exact problem that contributes to the estimated 50% attrition rate of doctoral students (Bair & Haworth, 2004; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles & Millett, 2006).

A major consideration in studying doctoral student attrition has been the process of socialization. A review of the research studies is needed in which doctoral student socialization has been specifically considered and the effect it has on the doctoral student not only for the express purpose of understanding attrition of these students. Table 2 provides a summary of research on doctoral student socialization.

Bess (1978) found from a survey of 87 graduate students at one large University who were aspiring to be faculty that those who were previously socialized to the academy were most successful. This group of graduate students was compared to younger faculty \((n = 25)\) and older faculty \((n = 582)\) at the same school and it was found that in many ways, they held similar preferences to academic work tasks. For example, attitudes towards undergraduate instructional activities like adherence to the course syllabus, use of textbooks as part of instruction, and asking student criticism of one’s research show no significant differences between graduate students and older faculty in this study. Therefore, graduate school is simply self-replicating the academy based on prior and future socialization process. Indeed, it has been stated that “social interaction with one’s peers and faculty becomes closely linked not only to one’s intellectual development, but also to the development of important skills required for doctoral completion” (Tinto, 1993, p. 232). This is the main reason why studying doctoral student persistence has
Table 2

*Summary of Empirical Studies in Socialization of Doctoral Student*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Major Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bess (1978)</td>
<td>87 graduate students and 607 faculty at one university</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>Graduate students are more similar to faculty in attitudes/ preferences to academic work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baird (1992)</td>
<td>596 doctoral students at one university</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>As students progress in their plan of study, they move closer to faculty and peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner &amp; Thompson (1993)</td>
<td>37 minority and 25 majority women doctoral students at one university</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Minority women doctoral students receive different socialization experiences than do majority women doctoral students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herzig (2002)</td>
<td>18 graduate students and 10 faculty in one university dept.</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Identified obstacles to participation/socialization in doctoral program in math.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golde (1998)</td>
<td>18 doctoral students in one university (left in first year of doctoral study)</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Socialization in the first year of doctoral study is critical to persistence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin (2002); Nyquist et al. (1999); Wulff, Austin, Nyquist, &amp; Sprague (2004)</td>
<td>99 graduate students (4-year longitudinal study at three universities)</td>
<td>interviews</td>
<td>Graduate students do not receive socialization for the professoriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovitt (2001)</td>
<td>816 doctoral students surveyed (511 completers, 305 noncompleters), 30 interviews with noncompleters, 33 faculty interviews, 18 interviews with Directors of Graduate Study, observational data and artifacts at two universities</td>
<td>survey, interviews, observation, artifact analysis, statistical analysis of faculty retention</td>
<td>Those who completed doctoral study experienced high levels of socialization/ integration to their academic department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued)

**Summary of Empirical Studies in Socialization of Doctoral Student**

<table>
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<th>Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Major Finding</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weidman &amp; Stein (2003)</td>
<td>50 doctoral students in one university</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>Students who perceive their academic department as encouraging scholarly activity are socialized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nettles &amp; Millett (2006)</td>
<td>9,036 doctoral students (nationwide)</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>Education doctoral students’ peer-to-peer interaction is low; faculty mentor is essential.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardner, Hayes, &amp; Neider (2007)</td>
<td>11 faculty and 11 doctoral students in one university’s college of education</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Socialization is powerful force whereby doctoral students and faculty share essential ideas about scholarship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardner (2008)</td>
<td>40 doctoral students in two departments at two universities</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Doctoral students require different levels of support at different phases of study.</td>
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</table>

*Note.* Research indicated in chronological order as presented in this literature review.

become essentially linked to studies of doctoral student socialization. It would be helpful for purposes of this literature review to tease apart the concepts of doctoral student persistence and doctoral student socialization.

Baird has conducted numerous investigations on the topic of doctoral student socialization (Baird, 1990a, 1992, 1993, 1996). In the paper presented at the annual meeting of The American Educational Research Association, Baird (1992) reported from a survey of 596 doctoral students from the University of Illinois (Chicago) that “socialization to academic values also entails the emphasis of intellect and independence over interpersonal interaction and intuition” (p. 6). In the study, Baird also found that as
students became more advanced in their studies; they also experienced greater involvement with faculty as well as their peers. In both cases, the doctoral students classified these interactions as close, personal relationships. This key to effective doctoral socialization is through the relationships doctoral students experience while involved in their academic program.

Turner and Thompson (1993) built on Baird’s work by looking more specifically at women’s (majority and minority) experiences with socialization in one University. In the study, they interviewed 37 minority women doctoral students and 25 majority women doctoral students at the same university. They found that majority women actually experienced socialization much differently than did the minority women. Majority women had more opportunities for apprenticeship and working with faculty in the coauthoring of papers, presenting at conferences, as well as through teaching and research assistantships. Most importantly, it was found that in this University, majority women were more likely to have a mentor and were more likely to find their departments cooperative whereas the minority women were more likely to find the department competitive. While it is important to recognize that the greater access to socializing experiences translate into greater success in graduate school, this study could be one source of evidence that indicates why minority persons, especially women, are so underrepresented in higher education.

Herzig (2002, 2004) has also found that women and people of color are less likely to be integrated into certain departments (i.e., math departments) due to the culture of the community of learning. In her study, Herzig (2002) interviewed 18 doctoral students and
10 faculty in a “Mathematics Department at a large, public research university” (p. 181). The interviews explored the participants’ “mathematical autobiographies” (p. 182) within the context of their academic experience. It was found that students experienced significant obstacles to integration into their departments and, in some cases, obstacles that led to their eventual attrition from doctoral study. She concluded:

In order to improve the experiences and numbers of women and students of color in doctoral mathematics, faculty and policymakers need to consider things they can do to minimize or eliminate the obstacles these students face to participation in all aspects of the academic and social communities of their departments and programs. (Herzig, 2004, p. 203)

Golde (1998) from the outset of her prolific line of inquiry focused on doctoral student attrition and socialization (Chun-Mei, Golde, & McCormick, 2007; Golde, 2007, 2008; Golde, Bueschel, Jones, & Walker, 2009; Golde & Dore, 2001, 2004; Golde & Walker, 2006) illustrating that the first year of the doctoral program is the most important time for students to make appropriate decisions related to their future. The first year of doctoral study is also the time for “authenticity of the socialization experience” (Golde, 1998, p. 63) to occur. The participants in this study include 18 doctoral students from four different departments at a single university who left doctoral study within the first year of their program. Interviews were conducted with these former doctoral students and Golde found the reasons for leaving doctoral study can fit into one of the following categories: intellectual reasons, discipline did not meet expectations, and/or reality of faculty life did not meet expectations (1998). Students need to be exposed during that
first year of doctoral study to some of the realities of their future career choice and the
details associated with the work germane to the field. Indeed, some students will still
leave doctoral study as a result of this experience but at least they will do so from a
well-informed perspective.

Austin, Nyquist, Sprague, Wulff and their students (Austin, 2002; Nyquist et al.,
1999; Wulff, Austin, Nyquist, & Sprague, 2004) conducted a four-year longitudinal
qualitative study of 99 graduate students at three geographically diverse institutions.
Two of the institutions were doctoral-granting and the third was a masters-granting
institution. The purpose of the study was to understand how these graduate students were
learning how to be teachers, researchers, and scholars in higher education. One of the
unexpected findings from the study was that the researchers found “many told us that
these interviews were the only occasions where they [graduate students] had a serious
conversation about their goals, how they thought about careers, or how they were
developing as teachers, researchers, and prospective scholars” (Austin, 2002, p. 106).
The study uncovered an interesting flaw in many doctoral programs, the lack of planned
reflection in the process of emerging scholars. At least for the participants in the study,
reflection required to be a scholar was not built into their doctoral programs.
Furthermore, the graduate students are lacking in the full understanding of what is
required for the academic life in which they would be engaged. They were not receiving
the professional development necessary to take up the role as faculty after they graduated.
They did not receive guidance on the complete list of tasks that all faculty members must
complete including “advising, committee work, curriculum development, managing
ethica l issues, and public service and outreach” (Austin, 2002, p. 105). It resonates with the important statement from Golde and Dore (2001) that “the training doctoral students receive is not what they want, nor does it prepare them for the jobs they take” (p. 6).

Lovitt (2001), like Golde, conducted an important inquiry into the question of doctoral student attrition. The first component of this study, which includes six sources of data, involved a survey of 816 (511 completers and 305 noncompleters) doctoral students from 1982-84 in which she investigated this “invisible problem.” She studied nine departments at two universities and focused on the “social structural causes” (p. 255) of “completers” versus “noncompleters.” Not only did she survey doctoral students, but she also selected 30 noncompleters (two from each of the nine departments at the two universities sampled) to be interviewed over the phone. Also, she included interviews with 33 high- and low-Ph.D. productive faculty in each department, 18 Directors of Graduate Study, statistically analyzed faculty retention rates to compare with doctoral student departure, as well collected artifacts and observational data at each of the two universities. Her findings support the idea that students must be academically integrated to their respective departments if they are to find success and persist in their doctoral programs. Furthermore, she found that high aptitude does not necessarily provide as much support for the student as do previous socialization to the realities of life in graduate school. She found that many of the non-completers blamed themselves for deficiencies and not that they had been inappropriately socialized. The data from her study indicate that in academic departments that exhibit higher levels of social integration, students have lower rates of attrition. She concluded in her text that “lack of
integration was often either a direct or underlying cause of attrition” (Lovitts, 2001, p. 262).

Weidman and Stein (2003) in building on their framework (Weidman et al., 2001) of doctoral student socialization conducted a study with 50 doctoral students, 26 of them from a sociology department and the other 24 from an educational foundations department at the same university. The purpose of the survey questionnaire administered was to ascertain student experiences in “important elements in the socialization of graduate students” (p. 646). The findings indicate that when a student perceives that the department of study encourages students to engage in scholarly activities, the student is more likely to be socialized to the role of the scholar. Furthermore, in the two departments surveyed, this holds with previous theory (Schein, 1968; van Maanen & Schein, 1979) that the peer culture may be more powerful than the influence of faculty and developing “a community of scholars where the faculty treat each other and the students as colleagues” (Weidman & Stein, 2003, p. 653) is most effective in creating an attitude of scholarship.

Nettles and Millet (Millett & Nettles, 2009; Nettles & Millett, 2006) conducted a nationwide survey of doctoral students beginning in 1996 and lasting eight years. The study included 9,036 doctoral students from 21 doctoral granting institutions in 11 fields including: biological sciences, mathematics, economics, physical sciences, education, political science, engineering, psychology, English, sociology, and history. The survey developed by Nettles and Millet called the “Survey of Doctoral Student Finances, Experiences, and Achievements” was completed by 70% of the students invited to
participate. The motivation behind the survey was a desire to understand how doctoral students finance their education. However, for purposes of this literature review, the focus was on understanding doctoral student socialization, specifically education doctoral students that emerged from the study. The findings indicate social and academic interactions from faculty to student are high for education students; however, peer to peer social interactions are low. It was found across all disciplines, including education that having a mentor was positively related to degree completion as well as student satisfaction with their relationship with faculty. Also, contrary to popular belief, only 38% of the education doctoral students surveyed indicated that they desire a college or university faculty position upon graduation. This is one of the largest surveys of doctoral students to date and the results are representative of the contemporary doctoral student.

Gardner and colleagues (Gardner, Hayes, & Neider, 2007) like other researchers (Golde, 1998; Lovitts, 2001; Weidman & Stein, 2003) have found socialization to be a powerful force in the scholastic development of doctoral students. In their study (Gardner et al., 2007), it was found from interviews with 11 faculty and 11 doctoral students in one college of education that conceptions about the habits of mind, skills, and abilities are shared by the students and the faculty. Faculty and students alike seem to ascribe the same attitudes of mind to the holder of the doctorate in education. The researchers found from this study that socialization is a powerful force in the process of developing a doctoral student to scholar.

In another study involving 40 interviews with doctoral students from two different universities in chemistry and history departments at each institution, Gardner (2008)
found that doctoral students and candidates require different types of support in the different stages of study (i.e., coursework, examination, and dissertation). For example, she found developing relationships with peers, faculty, and staff was important to students in the coursework phase, whereas in the dissertation phase, students transition away from peer relationships as they work more closely with their advisor. She stated, “programs and students should seek opportunities for support through the transition to independence in all phases, such as the formation of writing support groups and continued mentoring relationships between peers” (Gardner, 2008, p. 347).

As can be seen from the research discussed above, the doctoral socialization process may be the most important in the life of the graduate student. Students “learn the ropes” and become acculturated to the life of the scholar (Schein, 1968; van Maanen & Schein, 1979). A greater understanding of the different facets of doctoral student experience in the different phases or stages of study is needed. Furthermore, more research is needed to understand doctoral student socialization in terms of “different demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age, enrollment status (emphasis added), and educational background” (Gardner, 2008, p. 347). This understanding is very important because if we are to improve the academy and create students who are more developed scholars before they reach the threshold of their professorial career (assuming that is the ambition, which it may not be), the discussion of socialization is critical. Not only is the discussion one that will lead graduate students to greater success in their respective careers, but this is a discussion that will lead to a more appropriately educated and prepared scholar of the future. The present study aims to investigate the
socialization experiences of *part-time* education doctoral students and candidates, specifically by focusing on peer mentorship. This study not only builds on this growing body of literature, but also focuses on the socialization force of peers and attempts to apply this socialization to a growing group of students who choose to pursue doctoral studies part-time.

**Doctoral Student Professional Identity**

An important component of doctoral student socialization is the study of doctoral student identity development. Identity has been defined as “attempts to relate the self and its workings to an ongoing social structure” (Becker & Carper, 1956, p. 341). Doctoral student professional identity has been more specifically defined as the student “endeavouring to develop another identity (that of scholar) within a chosen field (a particular proximal and extended disciplinary community) as they enter into, learn and use the particular discourse(s) and habits of mind of the group” (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009, p. 112). Scholarly work on doctoral student professional identity development has moved to the foreground in recent years (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Baker & Pifer, 2011; Colbeck, 2008; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; Rasanen & Korpiaho, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009).

McAlpine and Amundsen (2009) found in a reassessment of three earlier studies “collective as well as individual identity and pleasure as well as challenge in the myriad activities and contexts that are inherent to the experience of doctoral students” (p. 124). The researchers were struck by the overlap of the themes that emerged from the three individual studies because they were attempting to answer different research questions.
For example, it was found that doctoral students are shaped by the constant dialogue within the communities they wish to become identified. There is a tension between the actions the students can take to shape their professional identity and the reality of the experiences they have while in doctoral study.

Similarly, (Baker) Sweitzer and colleagues (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Baker & Pifer, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009) have found the struggle to forge identity as a doctoral student a critical piece of the doctoral student journey. In Sweitzer (2009), an effort is made to develop “preliminary models of doctoral student professional identity development and to address the paucity of research that explores the influence of relationships, both within and outside of the academic community, on outcomes such as professional identity development” (p. 2). In the article, Sweitzer described a longitudinal study of first year doctoral students and explored how peers, family, faculty, friends, and colleagues contributed to professional identity development. Through her work, she was able to develop “social network theory as a mechanism for exploring professional identity development” (p. 4). In studies with colleagues, (Baker) Sweitzer (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Baker & Pifer, 2011) investigated the dynamics of interpersonal relationships that doctoral students maintain that move beyond the typical dyadic understanding of how student professional identity forms. Still working within the framework of developmental network theory, (Baker) Sweitzer and colleagues worked to make explicit the connection between learning and relationships during doctoral studies.

Rasanen and Korpiaho (2011) developed a course for doctoral students that enabled students to explicitly address issues surrounding professional identity. The
course addressed the questions of “How to do this work? What to accomplish and achieve, in it and by it? Why these means and goals?” (p. 23, italics in original). Within this academic setting, Rasanen and Korpiaho were able to encourage their doctoral students to engage in deep reflection on the process of doctoral studies and at the same time develop professional identity as a scholar. The course was collegial in nature and approached academic tasks in practical ways that enabled students to develop identity to the role of scholar.

Doctoral student professional identity has moved to the foreground in recent years and has been discussed in numerous articles and chapters. Developing doctoral student identity is critical to the socialization of the emerging scholar. In the future, it is likely that doctoral student socialization will not be able to be addressed without a more robust understanding of doctoral student identity formation.

**Peer Mentoring**

**Introduction to the Concept of Mentoring**

Mentoring is any relationship that develops between mentor and protégé. The original term “mentor” is derived from the relationship described in Homer’s epic poem, *The Odyssey*, between two characters, Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, and an old man, Mentor. Mentor served as a guide and friend to Telemachus in Odysseus’ 10-year absence. The characteristics that Mentor embodies include loving, guiding, advising, and protecting. Mentor helps Telemachus in many ways throughout the story and on one occasion, his advice saves Telemachus’ life and on another he accompanies Telemachus on a search for his father (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Merriam, 1983). This
relationship between Mentor and Telemachus served as a starting point for understanding the concept of mentorship in a variety of settings and communities.

Three seminal works on traditional mentoring (older mentor with younger protégé) in career development, as well as teaching and learning, help to make the relationship clear (Daloz, 1986; Kram, 1988; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978). Levinson et al. (1978) conducted an interview study with 40 men to determine the effect the mentor had on the man’s life. Important among the findings was how the mentor would “support and facilitate the realization of the [protégé’s] Dream” (p. 98). The “Dream” is the ideal perception that the young man had for his adult life. In the study, it was further articulated that the mentor relationship was really a special kind of “love” that existed between mentor and protégé and that this relationship contributed to the success of the young man well into the future (Merriam, 1983; Merriam, Thomas, & Zeph, 1987). Daloz (1986) suggested that mentors guide the protégé and help them to identify problems along the way as well as unexpected benefits. He identified mentors as “guides” because “they lead us along the journey of our lives” (p. 17). He continued saying that “we trust them because they have been there before. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way” (p. 17). In this way, the mentor very generally helps the protégé and keeps him or her on the right track within the bounds of the special relationship. Similarly, Kram (1988) focused her identification of the mentor on a single individual who provides primary guidance to the protégé from the outset of their work within an organization.
Anderson and Shannon (1988) presented a useful framework for conceptualizing the mentoring relationship (see Figure 2). In this framework, the mentor must develop a relationship with the protégé in which they can be seen as teacher, sponsor, encourager, counselor, and friend. While this conceptualization of mentoring was described for implementing new teacher mentor programs, thus the “mentoring activities” section of the model, I believe this concept also nicely applies for graduate students’ inherent need for mentorship. Surrounding the circle are the dispositions of the mentor, which are necessary as a platform on which to situate the model. These dispositions could be held

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by either a faculty mentor or peer mentor; however, regardless of the relationship, this provides a theoretical framework in which this study can be situated.

**Peer Mentorship**

Peer mentorship between senior and junior students can be described as “building a professional relationship between the mentor and the mentee over time, and consisting of nurturing, educative and protective elements” (Aston & Molassiotis, 2003, p. 203). Peer mentorship can also “provide some of the same functions (e.g., information sharing, job related feedback, confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback and friendship) as true mentors” (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000, p. 637). Peer mentorship as a model for facilitating student development has met with success in the medical field (Aston & Molassiotis, 2003; Blair, Mayer, Ko, & Files, 2008; Dorgo, Robinson, & Bader, 2009; Hegeman, Hoskinson, Munro, Maiden, & Pillemer, 2007; Isaacson & Stacy, 2004).

Many of these programs create a formal mentor/mentee relationship that is determined before the students enter the field. In this way, the student receives support throughout their educative experience and is able to develop long-lasting relationships with their mentors.

Golde (2008) reminded us that professional education like that for doctors and nurses was originally taught master-apprenticeship style, which was fully based on the mentor-mentee system. This explains the contemporary acceptance of the peer mentoring model. One study calls this a “‘buddy’ system” where senior students are paired with junior students to provide support for the junior student while developing leadership qualities in the senior student (Aston & Molassiotis, 2003, p. 203). Other programs have
created networks of peer mentors that work together in a collaborative program for
specific purposes like writing for publication (Blair et al., 2008). These peer mentorship
attempts show signs of success in terms of facilitating not only student development
(mentee) but also developing crucial leadership skills for the mentor.

Peer mentorship programs in higher education have met with mixed results
(Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002). Furthermore, little research has been conducted in an
effort to truly understand the impact that peer mentorship has on the students involved,
even though this has become relatively common in higher educational practice (Boud &
Lee, 2005). Much of this work has been conducted in Australia due to government
policy change base funding to the institutions on completion rates of doctoral students
rather than on simply the enrollment of doctoral students (McAlpine & Norton, 2006).
Therefore much analysis of peer mentoring has resulted as one method of producing
more doctoral graduates than simply increasing the number of students enrolled (Boud &
Lee, 2005; Burnett, 1999; Harman, 2002). Peer mentoring offers one route of improving
the success of students without the requirement of greater spending from the institutional
perspective.

Developmental Network Perspective

Higgins and Kram (2001) reconceptualized the idea of one-on-one mentoring to
include multiple relationships concurrently existing for the protégé. Even though Kram
(1988) pioneered the idea of mentoring within organizations, especially in identifying a
senior mentor to work with the protégé, she reconsidered this limited conception of
mentoring in more recent work (Higgins & Kram, 2001). This is due to changes in career
development in recent years, especially due to “rapid pace of change in information and digital technologies” (p. 267). Higgins and Kram find it more appropriate to think of multiple mentors in the life experience of the protégé as being “developers” (p. 269) who may be found in “senior colleagues, peers, family, and community members” (p. 264).

The idea that emerged from this thinking is the “developmental network perspective” in which there may be multiple developers concurrently in the life of an individual that provide multiple perspectives and approaches to facilitate career development beyond the simple dyadic level of mentor with mentee. Developers can be individuals both within and outside of the organization the protégé finds oneself affiliated. These networks of individuals can work with either weak ties or strong ties and can provide multiple learning opportunities for the protégé within the social networks theory conceptualization.

Much like Weidman et al.’s (2001) framework for doctoral student socialization, Higgins and Kram’s (2001) notion of developers meshes well with the socialization framework for doctoral students including individuals from multiple organizations such as peers, family, employers, as well as prospective students. Part-time doctoral students especially find themselves involved in multiple institutions simultaneously (e.g., work environment, family, as well as the university). The networks that the doctoral student establishes will have a profound affect on the socialization but also on the mentorship potential that can be harnessed.
Doctoral Students and Peer Mentoring

Doctoral students are in a unique position where they experience stress, pressure from the academic program, as well as loneliness in the pursuit of their degree (Hadjioannou et al., 2007). It has been noted previously that the influence of peers may be one of the most important in the experience of a doctoral student (Austin, 2002; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Gardner, 2008; Golde, 1998; Schein, 1968; Van Maanen, 1978; Weidman et al., 2001). Therefore, it is important to look to some examples of the literature on doctoral student peer mentorship.

Fields (1998, p. 28) noted “surviving Ph.D. programs requires someone who is willing to show the way.” Much of the discussion in the literature centers on the effectiveness of the cohort model of peer mentorship for doctoral students (Basom & Yerkes, 1996; Mullen, 2003, 2006; Twale & Kochan, 2000) or establishing peer mentoring programs where experienced doctoral students mentor inexperienced doctoral students (Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007; Silva, Macian, & Mejia-Gomez, 2006). Identification of literature that examines the spontaneously developed peer mentorship group is needed for purposes of this study.

Studies Conducted on Doctoral Student Peer Mentoring

Studies on peer mentorship with doctoral students fall into two categories: the cohort or formal mentoring model as compared to the spontaneous or informal mentoring model. Mullen (2006, pp. 87-88) provided definitions of the two forms of mentoring. She defined formal mentoring as “a one-on-one relationship between a mentor and protégé that is predicated upon assignment to the relationship; an institutionalized cohort
led by a qualified mentor for a limited time and according to a predetermined schedule” (p. 87). She continued to describe informal mentoring as “spontaneous teaching and learning relationships that are not managed, structured or officially recognized” (p. 88).

The formal peer mentoring relationship (Mullen, 2006) is typical of the cohort strategy (Mullen, 2003; Twale & Kochan, 2000) that is established with the intent to improve some facet of graduate study. This may include writing (Mullen, 2003, 2006), teaching (O'Neal & Karlin, 2004; Silva et al., 2006) or stress reduction (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000). Table 3 provides a summary of studies conducted on the outcomes of peer mentorship for graduate students.

Twale and Kochan (2000, p. 191) documented the efforts of an “alternative cohort system” and seminar devised for students in three different strands of an educational leadership program. The purpose of the system was to provide support for a largely part-time doctoral student body. They utilized mixed methods in analyzing the cohort effectiveness through survey and focus group interviews. The survey was completed by 30 doctoral students and 18 cohort students participated in two focus group interviews. It was found that the “seminar and cohort experience contributed to the development of a collaborative graduate student community in this particular program” (p. 201). The small group structure of the cohort allowed students greater interaction and potential to develop relationships with their classmates. Furthermore, female students seemed to benefit especially from the experience of being in the cohort. The authors believed that the cohort structure offers promise in minimizing part-time doctoral student academic frustration.
Table 3

Summary of Studies Conducted on Peer Mentorship of Graduate Students

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<th>Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Major Finding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant-Vallone &amp; Ensher (2000)</td>
<td>29 peer mentors, 29 protégés</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>High mentor-protégé contact provided high levels of satisfaction with graduate program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mullen (2003, 2006)</td>
<td>15 doctoral students in cohort</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Members of cohort experienced connection with others, confidence, support, reciprocal learning, and holistic scholarly development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twale &amp; Kochan (2000)</td>
<td>30 part-time doctoral students surveyed, 18 students in focus groups</td>
<td>mixed methods</td>
<td>Members of cohort experienced a greater sense of collaborative community, female participants seemed to benefit the most from the cohort experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silva et al. (2006)</td>
<td>6 peer mentors and protégés</td>
<td>interaction/interview</td>
<td>Mentor TA provides individual guidance to new TA, mentor TA becomes more critical of one’s teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devenish et al. (2009)</td>
<td>6 doctoral student peers</td>
<td>self-reflection</td>
<td>Collaborative peer groups provide the greatest support to progress in doctoral study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadjioannou et al. (2007)</td>
<td>5 doctoral students and professor</td>
<td>self-reflection</td>
<td>The group provided a community of learners that allowed scholarly development as well as reduced isolation.</td>
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</table>

Note. Research indicated in chronological order as presented in this literature review.

Mullen (2003, 2006) created a supportive group that she called “Writers In Training” or WIT cohort with her graduate student advisees. She had a large group of advisees (25 doctoral students) who were in need of more assistance in developing appropriate academic writing skills than she was able to personally provide (Mullen,
2003). In the study, 15 members of the WIT cohort were interviewed and several themes emerged from the interviews. These themes include the following: students who work together towards the aim of becoming better scholarly writers, they have taken greater responsibility for their emerging scholarship and have even had the experience of connecting more with others, increased confidence, increased support system, as well as reciprocal learning and increased development as scholar-practitioner (Mullen, 2006).

New graduate students often experience stress as they transition into graduate school, especially during the first year or transition period (Nyquist et al., 1999). Perhaps peer mentors can help reduce stress as the protégé makes the transition. However, as described by Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2000), this may not be the result of the mentor/mentee relationship. In their survey of 29 peer mentors and 29 protégés, they found that peer mentors and protégés that had greater contact found greater satisfaction in their respective academic programs. However, the protégé did not experience reduced stress levels. Although this may make the program seem like a failure, the students actually experienced “increased levels of psychosocial and instrumental support, and that those with high levels of support are more satisfied with their peer mentoring relationships” (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000, p. 640).

Peer mentoring to assist graduate student instructors (GS Instructors) or teaching associates (TAs) has been documented as another example of formal mentoring (O'Neal & Karlin, 2004; Silva et al., 2006). In the Silva et al. study of 6 peer mentors and their mentees, they found that “a peer mentoring program that allows TAs who have experience and who have been positively evaluated to mentor new TAs” (p. 241). They
found one of the benefits of peer mentoring will allow the mentee (the new TA) to be more comfortable in developing a plan of action for improving their teaching than they would be with an administrative supervisor. Also, the peer mentors (the more experienced TA) learns quite a bit and has opportunity to become more critical of their own teaching. Similarly in the O’Neal and Karlin (2004) survey of GS Mentors and GS Instructors, they found that “the nature of the peer mentor-mentee interaction is such that it allows both individuals to give and receive benefits” (p. 321). The nonthreatening approach that the GS Mentor provides in this case makes it possible for the GS Instructor to more easily implement strategies for improvements in their teaching. Furthermore, the high quality of service provided by the GS Mentors allows the University to benefit from improved teaching both by GS Instructors as well as Mentors, but also allows all involved in the relationship to benefit from the pride they take in their teaching efforts (O’Neal & Karlin, 2004). Indeed, it has been said “in terms of professional development it’s [mentoring] the very best thing that has happened to them [the mentors]” (Shaw, 1995, p. 265).

Two studies (Devenish et al., 2009; Hadjioannou et al., 2007) regarding doctoral student interactions describe spontaneously developed study groups or “informal peer mentorship” as defined by Mullen (2006). Both of these papers exemplify doctoral student peer mentorship (Devenish et al., 2009; Hadjioannou et al., 2007) in which the students created their own groups to meet their graduate studies head-on. The students realized that this work would make them more mature and facilitated growth towards more effective scholarship.
The Devenish et al. (2009) paper is a self-reflection on their 6 person doctoral student “study group” (p. 60). They noted the “apparent ‘invisibility’ of specific social behaviours [sic] in certain contexts” (p. 63) due to the fact that their work within this group would not be noticed or understood as important by the University. This is critical to their discussion because they found that without recognizing the success of their study group, these types of behaviors would simply disappear from the academic setting and remain unrecognized for the benefits they confer on the student. Indeed, this group of students indicates “that collaborative peer support has been one of the most valuable enablers to our progress” (p. 61).

In the Hadjioannou et al. (2007) paper, the authors documented their experiences “through self-regulated weekly meetings” consisting of 5 members: 4 doctoral students and their professor who “developed dynamic and diverse relationships” (p. 165). The study group was only loosely led by a faculty member who was interested in introducing students to this type of peer interaction, but was generally led by students on a weekly basis. The group meetings provided a nurturing and supportive environment and developed into “a community of learners” (p. 170). The faculty leader made efforts to avoid the emergence of a classroom setting led by one teacher as is typical in graduate studies and as a result, the group became self-sustaining. The students indicate that this peer community allowed them to acquire much better usage of the academic discourse, develop much better academic writing skills as subject to peer review, while at the same time, reducing the isolation typical of doctoral study and providing essential emotional support for all. In final analysis of the experience within the group, the members believe
“we created lifelong relationships that will endure well beyond the boundaries of the academic term” (Hadjioannou et al., 2007, p. 175). Taken together, both of these studies (Devenish et al., 2009; Hadjioannou et al., 2007) embrace the essence of doctoral student peer mentorship. They illustrate the importance of student study and writing groups and they also contain the essential theme that peer mentorship is essential to the socialization and development of scholars.

The literature demonstrates the importance of peer mentorship as part of the development of scholars in terms of writing (Mullen, 2003, 2006), teaching (O'Neal & Karlin, 2004; Silva et al., 2006), collaboration (Devenish et al., 2009; Hadjioannou et al., 2007), and increasing psychosocial and instrumental support (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000). Formal as well as informal peer mentorship provides guidance to graduate students that not only benefit the mentor but also the mentee. It has been noted that “students are encouraged to see a variety of individuals as resources that may provide them various forms of support as they work to become thoughtful scholars” (Stephenson & Christensen, 2007, p. 73S).

**Part-Time Doctoral Students**

Part-time doctoral students in education now comprise 65% of all students enrolled in any doctoral program in education nationwide (Choy & Cataldi, 2006). This is not only true in the United States but also in other countries like the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia where part-time doctoral students comprise a majority of students enrolled (Boud & Lee, 2005; Devenish et al., 2009; Neumann & Rodwell, 2009; Pole, 2000; Sussman, Stoddart, & Gorman, 2004; Wolstenholme, 2008). Recognition of this
trend is needed because at least in contemporary colleges of education, the part-time student is more the norm than the exception. Throughout the history of graduate education in the United States, part-time students have been viewed as inferior to their full-time counterparts (Pittman, 1997). It was viewed by some, primarily in an attitude of elitist tradition that pursuing a graduate degree as a part-time student is inferior to the full-time residential pursuit (Conant, 1963; Glazer, 1986; Pittman, 1997). Although part-time doctoral student status may be viewed as inferior, these students comprise a unique group because they bring an abundance of experience to the table, they are generally older, and have had multiple years of experience in leadership positions in education that should be valued and not pushed away as irrelevant (Erickson et al., 2004; Syverson, 1999; Watts, 2008). Table 4 provides a summary of part-time doctoral student literature.

Pittman (1997), in *Surviving Graduate School Part Time*, indicated that the adherence to full-time student status as the best way to pursue graduate study is erroneous.

The traditional graduate education model has resulted in restrictive policies and regulations, such as strict residency requirements, severely limited use of transfer and extension course credits, and the disallowing of some instructional formats (correspondence or other forms of distance education, for example). Many university administrators, graduate deans, and faculty councils tend to view such restrictions as “standards” that ensure quality. They rarely consider that they might be no more than practices, based mainly on nostalgia, that function as barriers—or at least annoyances—to working adults pursuing degrees on a
Table 4

Summary of Part-Time Doctoral Student Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Major Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pittman (1997)</td>
<td>theoretical, based on 20 years of the author’s personal experience in working with part-time graduate students</td>
<td>Part-time graduate students lack access to collegiate culture, limited access to professors. Part-time doctoral students in education are most common due to the professional culture of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith (2000)</td>
<td>observation and interview with two distinct doctoral programs, one within the educational administration department (Ed.D.) and the other within the traditional academic culture in one College of Education</td>
<td>Part-time doctoral students in the Ed.D. program negotiate standards of degree expectations due to time constraints and pressure from the work environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erickson et al. (2004)</td>
<td>theoretical, based on the authors’ personal work with educational administrators in doctoral programs in educational leadership</td>
<td>Modification of existing structure (but not the expectations) of doctoral study need to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neumann and Rodwell (2009)</td>
<td>quantitative survey of 15,200 research graduate students in assessment of analysis of satisfaction upon graduation</td>
<td>Part-time research students are found to perceive less satisfaction with intellectual climate and infrastructure of the university or department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner and Gopaul (2011)</td>
<td>qualitative interviews with 10 part-time doctoral students across disciplines in one university</td>
<td>Part-time doctoral students need support in their unique positions as full-time professionals because these students feel they lack balance, support, and do not fit the mold of the typical doctoral student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Research indicated in chronological order as presented in this literature review.

part-time basis. Although the reality of graduate study has changed about everywhere, the mythology often remains (Pittman, 1997, p. 4)

Part-time students do have unique considerations for completing their graduate study and these factors are considerable and may still create barriers for many potential
students. However, if the student is thoughtful in planning his or her graduate education experience, he or she may succeed. Some issues that need to be addressed include selecting the appropriate program for graduate study, including the possibility of distance education, if it is available; dealing with university regulations and rules; negotiating the registration process; and not the least of importance is financing the education (Pittman, 1997).

Smith (2000) conducted a study of the cultural differences between the “vocational culture” of doctoral programs (Ed.D.) in an educational administration department primarily comprised of part-time doctoral students and their faculty compared to faculty and their primarily full-time “academic culture” of doctoral students in the larger College of Education (p. 359). He found that the part-time group (including their faculty) was more likely to adjust the expectation standards lower to meet the time constraints of the part-time doctoral students. He described this culture of negotiation as detrimental to the overall quality of the experience students get from their doctoral education. On the other hand, this readjustment of expectations allows students to complete tasks that are manageable in the time they have to dedicate to doctoral studies. Much like the culture of medical students (Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961), these part-time doctoral students in educational administration negotiate expectations to the reality of their lives. Tensions still exist between the professional (vocational) doctoral programs and the traditional theory-based (academic) doctorate.

Erickson et al. (2004) suggested ways in which the doctoral plan of study for education administrators could be reformed to more efficiently meet the needs of the
“part-time learner / full-time leader.” These reforms would include all aspects of the doctoral education process including instructional delivery of the courses, a changed comprehensive exam format, as well as a modified dissertation procedure. The traditional view of doctoral education has been viewed as a full-time undertaking beginning with coursework, culminating in the comprehensive exam, followed by the intensive dissertation writing phase. It has been suggested that the complete format of this process does not need to change but the approach needs modification. For example, it would be helpful for the part-time doctoral student to be considering the dissertation from the very beginnings of coursework. It would streamline the process if the student was encouraged to be reading and thinking about the ideas they would like to address in the dissertation. In this way, the student can be reading about the topic he or she is considering researching and that it would be possible for the student to have the literature review portion of the dissertation completed before even completing coursework. Furthermore, the idea of a separate comprehensive exam procedure should be replaced with the portfolio concept. Not only is this a desirable approach for the student but it is also consistent with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. Finally, the dissertation needs to be approached not as a separate part of the doctoral student experience but totally integrated into the plan. The authors recommended that the dissertation should also be completed “within a year to eighteen months after completing the comprehensive examination” (Erickson et al., 2004, p. 22). They suggested this timeline because if a part-time student does not complete within this time, it will be more difficult and the possibility of not completing becomes more likely.
The idea of reform for doctoral education is a new idea that needs to be seriously considered if the universities are to remain competitive and viable for a new generation of doctoral students (Erickson et al., 2004). It will take a change in the philosophic approach, a change in delivery, teaching, and learning, as well as adjustments to the curriculum if the part-time doctoral program is to be effective. The philosophical changes that will need to be made include asking the important question: “For what purpose?” (p. 7). This will include teaching philosophies that are derived from both the scientific research tradition as well as the utilitarian and vocational applications. The change in delivery, teaching, and learning aspect of program reform will include online delivery of courses, a decrease of expectations for on-campus sessions but a longer time frame for the meetings. For example, there would be less class sessions per semester but they would meet for multiple hours. The most crucial aspect of reforming the delivery of coursework for part-time students would include the following: encourage continual student contact with faculty, even outside the classroom; encourage teamwork among students (cohorts are strongly recommended or maybe even required); active learning, prompt feedback to students, high time on task, and expect only excellence from students. Finally, the change in the curriculum would include a change in purpose, content, and sequence; solicit student information; adjust student evaluations as well as adjust course program design (Erickson et al., 2004).

Neumann and Rodwell (2009) suggested that part-time doctoral students are less satisfied with “the infrastructure support provided by the institutions and departments, and have a less favourable perception of the research climate of their department than full-
time research students” (p. 63). This finding comes from a nationwide survey of 15,200 graduates from Australian research universities who responded to a “Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire” upon graduation between the years 2000-2005. Even though this study was conducted in Australia, it does have international applications. In the paper, Neumann and Rodwell provided suggestions for reducing the “invisible” nature of part-time research students and echo sentiments of other scholars (Erickson et al., 2004; Syverson, 1999; Watts, 2008). These suggestions for improvement to part-time doctoral study include extending university working hours to evenings and weekends, utilizing better communications with students via newsletters and online resources, and creating student-tailored support, especially for slow-completing students.

Gardner and Gopaul (2011) conducted an exploratory study on the experiences of part-time doctoral students due to the dearth of studies conducted on this group. They conducted interviews with 10 part-time doctoral students across disciplines in one University and they found that part-time doctoral student experience entails much work to find balance, support, and fitting the mold of the typical doctoral student. They make suggestions much like other scholars (Erickson et al., 2004; Neumann & Rodwell, 2009; Syverson, 1999; Watts, 2008) including reducing the “benign neglect” of this group of students, providing campus-wide peer group support in some form, and scheduling courses and requirements that fit with the full-time work responsibilities of the part-time doctoral student (Gardner & Gopaul, 2011, p. 14).

Part-time doctoral students are a distinct group of students and require special consideration for their unique needs. Part-time doctoral study has traditionally been
viewed as inferior to full-time study and debate still exists about the purpose of doctoral study whether it is for vocational purpose versus traditional academic purpose. Part-time doctoral students cannot be ignored because they comprise a large population in contemporary colleges of education nationally as well as internationally. The needs of this group need to be addressed if colleges and universities want to continue to admit and support this group of students in their scholarly efforts.

**Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter has focused on three areas of literature: socialization of doctoral students, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral students.

The literature on doctoral student socialization is robust and includes numerous studies on the impact of peers (and faculty) in the developmental processes needed for the emerging scholar (Austin, 2002; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Weidman et al., 2001). However, missing from this body of literature is a study that addresses the experiences of part-time students with peer mentorship towards their socialization to the academy. The literature does include studies with full-time students such as TAs and GS instructors (O'Neal & Karlin, 2004; Silva et al., 2006). To date, the experiences of part-time students with peer mentorship have not been sufficiently addressed or investigated through empirical study (Mullen, 2003; Twale & Kochan, 2000).

Furthermore, previous studies on peer mentorship and the experiences that part-time doctoral students have had are largely anecdotal (Devenish et al., 2009; Hadjioannou et al., 2007; Sussman et al., 2004; Wolstenholme, 2008). Anecdotal writing provides an excellent starting point in which to situate this study of part-time education.
doctoral students. More than 20 years ago, it was noted that socialization to the academy has been primarily investigated with full-time, traditional graduate students (Baird, 1990b). Does the understanding of how part-time students become socialized and experience socialization mirror those experiences of full-time students or are there completely different processes at work? This is a question this study seeks to answer.

Even today, there is a dearth of literature on the experiences of part-time doctoral students. Specifically, it has been suggested that studies are needed to explicitly investigate the multiple experiences of doctoral students (Gardner, 2008; Gardner & Gopaul, 2011; Weidman & Stein, 2003), including those of part-time students with peer mentorship. Literature about the experiences of part-time doctoral students has mainly addressed facilitating completion or providing helpful hints for survival of the process (Erickson et al., 2004; Neumann & Rodwell, 2009; Pittman, 1997; Watts, 2008). Peers are identified as one of the most important socializing agents for doctoral and graduate students (Weidman et al., 2001) and may serve as excellent mentors for the doctoral student according to the developmental network perspective (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

The question remains: What does this experience look like? This is a question that this study aims to answer. If there is to be effort made to improve academic institutions, student experiences need to serve as the beginning of this process (Pole, 2000). What experiences have part-time doctoral students had with peer mentorship and how does this contribute to their socialization? This is the essential question that needs to be answered before any change in the format of doctoral studies for part-time students can occur.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the socialization experiences of part-time doctoral students through peer mentorship. The previous chapter provided an overview of the literature on socialization, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral students. Due to the fact that most education doctoral students in the U.S. are enrolled part-time (Choy & Cataldi, 2006), an understanding of this population’s socialization and experiences with peer mentorship is warranted. Also, there is a dearth of literature on the experiences that doctoral students have with peer mentorship (Mullen, 2003, 2006), and this literature is largely anecdotal (Devenish et al., 2009; Gurvich et al., 2008; Hadjioannou et al., 2007). The research questions are:

1. How do part-time doctoral students experience socialization through peer mentorship?
   a. How do part-time doctoral students experience spontaneous peer mentorship?
   b. How do part-time doctoral students experience peer mentorship as a result of their involvement in formal socialization experiences (i.e., the College’s Doctoral Student Forum)?

2. How can the experiences of these part-time doctoral students be used to create implications for practice of socialization by peer mentorship?

Phenomenological Research Design

This study investigates the socialization experiences of part-time doctoral students as a result of peer mentorship and therefore, the qualitative phenomenological method is
appropriate for this study. According to Moustakas (1994) in a “Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction we derive a textural description of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon, the constituents that comprise the experience in consciousness, from the vantage point of an open self” (p. 34). Van Manen (1990) indicated, “the task of phenomenological research and writing: to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience” (p. 41, italics in original). Phenomenology is the process of distilling the experiences of participants into essences (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Essences can be defined as “the grasp of the very nature of something” (van Manen, 1990, p. 177).

I borrow from two of the several perspectives of phenomenological research for this study. The first type of phenomenological research is hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) and the second type is transcendental or psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). In van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the researcher is interested in viewing lived experience and interpreting a text from these life experiences of the participants (van Manen, 1990). Applied to this study, I created narrative biographical sketches for each participant that allowed me to create a more general composite description for all combined participants’ experiences. In Moustakas’ transcendental phenomenology, the researcher brackets his or her experiences in order that “the phenomenon is perceived and described in its totality, in a fresh and open way” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). I have told “My Story” in Chapter 1 and later in this chapter, I attempt to “Situate Myself in the Study” in an attempt to bracket my experiences so I may approach my participants with fresh eyes and ears. I am a
part-time education doctoral student and my experiences must be bracketed before I can interpret and create a text with the experiences of my participants. Furthermore, both of these approaches (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990) are appropriate for pursuing the research questions in this study as I bracket my experience and then move forward to create an appropriate text representing the participants’ experiences.

A phenomenological design is utilized in order to understand the essence (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990) of the experiences of part-time doctoral students’ socialization through peer mentorship. This method is chosen because the purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of the participants and to find the meaning and essence that these part-time doctoral students assign to their experiences with peer mentorship and how it contributes to their socialization.

One aspect of the phenomenological approach is that the researcher must situate experiences and meaning-making process in order to understand the experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). This is needed in order to understand the meaning the participants assign to their experiences but also to embrace a participatory consciousness (Heshusius, 1994) while simultaneously investigating their experiences, in light of my own experiences. Due to the fact that I am a part-time education doctoral student, I have the advantage of understanding the experiences of my participants in a personal way. I have bracketed my own experiences before exploring the experiences of my participants in order to create a complete understanding of the phenomenon of the socialization of part-time doctoral students through peer mentorship. Van Manen (1990) stated, “it is not until I have identified my interest in the nature of a selected human experience that a true
phenomenological questioning is possible” (p. 42). Therefore by knowing my experience as a part-time doctoral student, I can explore the experiences of my participants and thus merge my experiences with theirs.

Phenomenological studies require the bracketing of the researcher’s perspectives in order to approach the description of an experience with as fresh a set of eyes as possible (Moustakas, 1994). As such, my own motivations for this study are important to recognize. I provide an overview of myself in the next section, “Researcher Characteristics,” as one way of bracketing my experiences so that I can attempt to see the experiences of the participants in a fresh, new light. These characteristics described in this section differ from “My Story” as presented in Chapter 1 because I am attempting to show how my experience overlaps or differs from the stories told by my participants as well as lay out my assumptions about part-time doctoral students. In this way, I can listen to the experiences of my participants and view their experiences freshly or separately from my own experiences. I also believe, as Heshusius (1994) observed, that it is important to manage my subjectivity; it is important to become participatory in my experiences and interactions with my participants. For instance, in my own experience as a part-time doctoral student, I have struggled to complete my graduate work and maintain my effectiveness in my teaching career while simultaneously preparing for a future career as researcher and professor. I believe other part-time doctoral students experience similar struggles. This study is not an objective telling of participants’ stories but also a merging of their self experiences with my self experiences in order to construct meaning that can be described as “selfother” (Heshusius, 1994, p. 17). This is important because true
participatory knowing recognizes the deep kinship between self and other and allows for the emergence of data from the researcher’s relationship with the participants that truly is greater than the sum of the parts (Heshusius, 1994; Peshkin, 1988; van Manen, 1990).

I have chosen phenomenology for my research method for this study because I would like to understand part-time students’ experiences with peer mentorship and how it contributes to their socialization. I also want to take the data from this research as one example and use this knowledge to better understand how “practices or policies” (Creswell, 2007, p. 60) can be developed to aid these students in their growth as scholars (research question 2), especially through the mentorship of their peers since these individuals may very well have the most influence on the student (Van Maanen, 1978).

**Researcher Characteristics**

In any qualitative inquiry project, the researcher is identified as the instrument for the research (Eisner, 1981, 1991). This means that “the major source of data emanates from how the investigator experiences what it is he or she attends to” (Eisner, 1981, p. 8). Eisner (1991) also indicated that the researcher must see what there is to observe in a given situation and then assign meaning through interpretation of events or assigning meaning to what there is to see and hear in a given setting. The researcher moves from recognition to perception to interpretation and this is a direct function of the researcher’s prior experience. I need to recognize my own “warm and cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18).

In this study, I needed to lay out my assumptions before I proceeded because these assumptions are based on my experiences as a part-time education doctoral student.
Furthermore, I exercised explicit reflexivity for purposes of this research. Because of the fact that I have similar experiences as my participants, I need to recognize as stated by Mauthner and Doucet (2003, p. 416) that “as social researchers we are integral to the social world we study” and this affected my data gathering as well as data analysis phase of this study. I did not want to be guilty of what Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated as the trouble when researchers “fail to see much of what is there because they come to analytic sessions wearing blinders, composed of assumptions, experience, and immersion in the literature” (p. 75).

Therefore, in this study, part of my research design included researcher journaling that was used in the data analysis (see Appendix F for an example of a journal entry). I attempted to be reflexive in my efforts and consciously worked to be aware of my subjectivity and tried to take off the blinders that would limit what I could see from my research. One way I attempted to take off the blinders is through the researcher journal. Throughout the research process, I completed journal reflections on my thinking about process and my assumptions. In this way, I attempted to make connections and find differences between my experiences and the experiences of my participants (see entries on Jan and George in Appendix F specifically for examples of my reflexivity). In the journal, I recorded assumptions that I held before and after interviews. Furthermore, I embedded my thoughts (in different colored font) to the transcripts from the interviews with each participant. Reflexivity is defined as follows (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006):

Reflexivity is the process through which a researcher recognizes, examines, and understands how his or her own social background and assumptions can intervene
in the research process. It is sensitivity to the important situational dynamics between researcher and researched that can impact the creation of knowledge. Researchers can use the process of reflexivity as a tool to assist them with studying across difference. (p. 146)

I used this definition in explicit ways to attempt to control the “creation of knowledge” that resulted from this research.

**Situating Myself in the Study**

I believe that my leadership position with the EHHS Doctoral Student Forum (as described in Chapter 1) has fueled my interest to pursue an understanding of peer mentorship towards socialization to the role of the scholar, especially for part-time students who are numerous and may need mentorship. For example, in the fall of 2008, while gathering information for a grant proposal in pursuit of financial support for the EHHS Doctoral Student Forum, we found that 56% of students in the coursework phase of their programs were enrolled part-time according to the College definition of hours of enrollment totaling less than eight hours of coursework per semester. Indeed, the part-time population in Kent State University’s College of EHHS is large and may benefit from mentoring to ensure the success of this group of students.

In an effort to understand my own biases as a result of my experiences, I turn to the methodological literature on phenomenology to assist me. Moustakas (1994) defined epoché as part of the philosophy of phenomenology as “to stay away from or abstain” (p. 85). This plays a part in the procedure of phenomenology for the researcher. He continued:
We set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things . . .

The world is placed out of action, while remaining bracketed. However, the world in the bracket has been cleared of ordinary thought and is present before us as a phenomenon to be gazed upon, to be known naively and freshly through a ‘purified’ consciousness. (p. 85)

I wish to be clear and up-front about the assumptions that I hold about part-time doctoral students from my experience at Kent State University. Researcher bias can “negatively affect the soundness of th[e] study and must be accounted for” (Burkholder, 2009, p. 45). The assumptions I hold from my experience and immersion in the literature are as follows:

1. I believe that the experiences that part-time doctoral students have with their peers are critical to the socialization they experience as emerging scholars.
2. I believe that part-time doctoral students experience peer mentorship in a different way than do their full-time counterparts and that this dynamic may be critical to their success in the academy.
3. I believe that part-time doctoral students miss out on some of the experiences inherent to the graduate experience but that missing out on these experiences will not invalidate the experiences that they do have.
4. I believe that part-time doctoral students need to work harder than their full-time counterparts on a personal level to obtain the guidance that they need to be successful in their academic journey and that sometimes, information provided by peers may create anxiety and be in some ways counterproductive.
5. I believe that the experiences that part-time doctoral students have can be enhanced with intentional educative experiences with their peers.

6. A high proportion of education doctoral students nationwide are part-time (Choy & Cataldi, 2006). Thus, I believe it is essential to consider the needs of this group in preparing them for their future as scholars, regardless of employment choice.

I attempt to represent my presence as researcher in the study and attend to how my voice is represented as well as recognition of the voices of the participants. The idea of reflexivity means that I need to ask myself some of the following questions: “How will I represent myself in the research process? To what extent have my own biases, values, and points of view entered into my selection of the questions I ask? The data I collect and analyze?” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 367). To the end of being reflexive about how I interpret the data and my role in the analytic process as the constructor of knowledge, I must be aware of my preconceived notions and make an effort to work without blinders in my work in this research (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003).

As the study evolved, I continued to add my voice (and assumptions) to the researcher journal and written memos as certain themes emerge. In this way, I developed a written trail that could be followed as the research process continues and moves into the analysis phase. For example, as can be seen in Appendix F, I have included samples of the researcher journal from March 8 and April 8, 2010, to illustrate my engagement in reflexivity. This type of writing allowed me to unpack my feelings and beliefs about what the participants were telling me and their experiences as part-time doctoral students.
In some cases I immediately felt very connected to certain participants like Kim, Linda, and George; in other cases, like with Jan and Andrew, I did not feel a deep connection because these individuals have had doctoral student experiences much different from my experiences. However, as I continued to read and re-read the transcripts and memo like those seen in Appendix G from May 19 and October 30, 2010, I began to understand the experiences of the group as a whole and began to conceive of the Proactive and Experiential Models of Part-Time Doctoral Student Socialization through Peer Mentorship as described in Chapter 5 (Figures 5 and 6). Journaling and memoing allowed me to develop my thinking as the research evolved and also provided me with a written trail that I could revisit as I moved into coding the data from the transcripts. I created a total of 22 journal and memo entries in my researcher journal throughout the process of interviewing, into data analysis and formulation of the theoretical models of part-time doctoral student experience.

**Sampling Procedure**

For this study, a purposive sample of 21 doctoral students was selected. Purposive samples were defined by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) as follows:

Also known as *judgment samples*, qualitative researchers are often interested in selecting these kinds of samples; the type of purposive sample chosen is based on the research question at hand as well as consideration of the resources available to the researcher. (p. 78, italics in original)

A sample size of 21 participants is within the range suggested by scholars for a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2007). It has been suggested that “participants range
from 1 up to 325” in a phenomenology (Dukes & Polkinghorne, in Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Specific to this study is the representation of at least one male and one female in each stage of the doctoral student experience (i.e., early coursework, late coursework, and dissertation). This will allow for understanding of different perspectives of individuals at different points in the scholarly journey. Furthermore, I have included individuals from the four different Schools in the College at the large university in Northeast Ohio (i.e., Schools 1-4). An overview of the demographics of the College is discussed in the next section. In considering perspectives from participants of different gender, different Schools within the College, and different phases of study in the doctoral program, it was possible to get a maximum variation of sampling for this study.

The main criterion for recruiting participants was their status as part-time doctoral students. Furthermore, since this study is germane to one College, it is important that the participants be part of the same educational setting. For as Moustakas (1994) noted, “the research participant has [to have] experienced the phenomenon, is intensely interested in understanding its nature and meanings, is willing to participate in a lengthy interview” (p. 107).

A second criterion was to recruit participants who represent the different phases or stages of doctoral study. The literature identifies numerous chronological stages or phases through which all doctoral students will progress (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Golde, 1998; Grover, 2007; Weidman et al., 2001). The demographics of the large university in the Northeast Ohio University’s College are
skewed toward a majority of women (76%). Therefore, I have included more women (at least 2/3 of the participants) in this study than men (see Figure 3).

![Pie chart showing gender distribution](image)

*Figure 3.* Gender Distribution in the College at the large university in Northeast Ohio in January 2010.

**Demographics of the Research Site**

Potential participants were emailed via the large university in Northeast Ohio’s moderated email listserv through the College’s Doctoral Student Forum group (see Appendix A). This listserv reached all doctoral students presently enrolled at the large university in Northeast Ohio in the College and is the most effective way to reach potential participants. I was the moderator of this listserv as a result of my position as a co-coordinator for the Doctoral Student Forum group at the College in the large university in Northeast Ohio. My leadership position with this organization and previous contact with this group of doctoral students allowed them to recognize me as a peer. My work with the Doctoral Student Forum (described in detail in the Introduction Chapter as
well as the previous “Researcher Characteristics” section) had provided important professional development opportunities for these students; they likely recognized me as an interested fellow student who is most concerned with their success and efficacy. Furthermore, as Grover (2007) indicated, “doctoral students should try to use their personal contact and work environments to facilitate access to a research sample” (p. 17). In my research, I was attempting to utilize this population as a rich source of data on the topic of doctoral socialization through peer mentorship. Furthermore, as a leader of this student organization, I had an important insider’s perspective on the experiences of the part-time doctoral student. My experiences as a part-time doctoral student allowed me to more fully understand the challenges these students experience. I was able to hear their experiences with a sense of empathy that an outsider would not be privileged to understand. The initial email contact contained an invitation to be a part of this research as well as the criteria for potential participants. The email also contained my contact information (email, address, and phone number; see Appendix A).

The potential participants were not excluded based on age, race ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, as long as they met the two criteria described above. I selected students from throughout all four schools (including Ph.D. degrees awarded in audiology, counseling and human development, cultural foundations, curriculum and instruction, educational psychology, evaluation and measurement, exercise physiology, health education and promotion, higher education administration, K-12 educational administration, school psychology, special education and speech language pathology) in the College for participation in the study. These participants included students from the
following schools: School 1 (includes 38% of all doctoral students in the College); and School 2 (includes 26% of all doctoral students in the College); School 3 (includes 24% of all doctoral students in the College); and School 4 (includes 12% of all doctoral students in the College). The participants in this study represented a purposive selection of individuals who generally represent the demographic profile of the College (see Figure 4). The sample included diverse perspectives of the experiences of the students enrolled in the College.

![Bar chart showing the distribution of doctoral students among the four Schools of the College.](chart)

*Figure 4.* Distribution of doctoral (Ph.D.) students among the four Schools of the College at the large university in Northeast Ohio in January 2010.

All participants signed consent forms (Appendix B) to be a part of this study as well as consented to audio-taping of the interviews (Appendix C) for transcription purposes. Each participant also filled out a demographic questionnaire from the outset of the research (see Appendix D). The demographic questionnaire served to collect basic
situational data from each individual (i.e., gender, age, education, current occupation, number of hours worked per week, marital status, children, etc.). This allowed me to represent the demographics of all participants in written presentation of this data. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality. I assigned each participant a pseudonym for use in the dissemination of findings from this study.

Participants

The sample included 7 men and 14 women between the ages of 24 and 55. Nineteen of the participants described themselves as Caucasian (one participant further identified herself as Welsh); two described themselves as African-American. All 21 participants met the requirement of being part-time doctoral students at the time of the study and all described not only their experiences in their doctorate but also specifically discussed socialization they had as a result of peer mentorship. Table 5 provides a summary of the position of the participants in the different phases of doctoral study. Table 6 provides a summary of the demographic data (based on the participant’s completed demographic questionnaire, see Appendix E) for each of the participants.

Participants are represented by earliest in the program and chronologically by year of experience and position in the doctoral program.

The inclusion criteria for selection of the participants include:

1. Was a part-time doctoral student in the college at the large university in Northeast Ohio who was registered at the time of the study.

2. Did not hold a graduate assistantship or teaching assistantship through the large university in Northeast Ohio at the time of the study.
Table 5

*Part-Time Doctoral Students Involved in Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Doctoral Program</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early coursework phase (Year 1-2)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late coursework phase (Years 2 and beyond)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation phase</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Participants selected based on their meeting the criteria of being part-time doctoral students and not holding a graduate or teaching assistantship at the large university in Northeast Ohio at the time of the study.
# Table 6

**Demographic Data for Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School In College</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Year In program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Teacher (Public School)</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 1, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor (Public School)</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 1, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Admission Representative for Career College</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Year 1, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Education Manager for Park District</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 1, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Teacher (Private School)</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 1, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo Ann</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>NTT Nursing Faculty</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 2, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joey</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Assistant Dean in College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 2, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Special Assistant to the Dean</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 2, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Teacher (Public School)</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 3, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>Exercise Physiologist</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 3, Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phyllis</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Stay-at-home mom and wife</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 5, Coursework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 6 (continued)

Demographic Data for Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School In College</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Year In program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abby</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Director of Service-Learning and Community Service for College</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 3, Coursework (Anticipating Comprehensive Exams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Staff Interpreter, Video Interpreter, Adjunct Faculty</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 3, Coursework (Recently Passed Comprehensive Exams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddy</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Teacher (Public School) and Adjunct Faculty</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 3, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty of Special Education</td>
<td>Caucasian (Welsh)</td>
<td>Year 4, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>NTT Math Faculty</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 5, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 5, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Assistant District Office Supervisor, Dept. of Health</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 6, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Professional Counselor</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Year 6, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>NTT Faculty, Coordinator of Children’s Program</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 7, Dissertation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 6 (continued)

Demographic Data for Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School In College</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Year In program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Teacher (Public School)</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Year 8, Dissertation (Graduated May 2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Demographic data collected from the participants via the Demographic Questionnaire completed by the participant at the outset of the study (see Appendix E). *All participants are identified by pseudonyms I selected.
**Procedure**

Prospective participants were initially contacted via the Doctoral Forum listserv and were invited to contact me personally via email or phone. During the initial contact, the participant was screened to make sure that they appropriately qualified as a part-time doctoral student and that they were capable and willing to participate in two scheduled face-to-face interviews on campus within the next several months. Ninety minutes were allocated for the first interview and 60 minutes for the second interview. Each participant was informed that they could stop the research process at any time. Each potential participant completed the short demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) in order to screen the participants. The participants were then sent the cover letter (Appendix B), including an overview of the interview protocol for the first and second interviews and the consent form for the project, as well as the audio-tape consent form (Appendix C). The participants were told that they could fill out these forms at the first interview but the information was being made available to them ahead of time if they wished to fill them out before the first interview. I conducted a pilot study on doctoral student socialization in the spring of 2009 and found that the students were more comfortable and felt more prepared when they were able to read and think about the interview questions ahead of time. Furthermore, the prompt for the visual representation was included with an overview of the interview questions on the letter of consent. A timeline for this project is found in Table 7.
Table 7

Timeline for Research Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of the Project</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial email contact</td>
<td>February 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Interviews</td>
<td>February-March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Interviews</td>
<td>April-May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up emails</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>May-December 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All participants were interviewed within the same semester (Spring 2010) to ensure that they were at the same stage of doctoral study throughout data collection.

Demographic Questionnaire

As a part of the screening process, each participant was asked to fill out a basic demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) for the purposes of understanding the background of these participants. The questionnaire allowed me to determine if participants fit the criteria for the study. This questionnaire was also helpful in establishing rapport and understanding some of the living conditions of the participants. The demographic questionnaire solicited the following information from each participant: demographics, work experience, educational background, and current graduate status (see Appendix E). The purpose of the questionnaire was to not only screen the participants but also to collect information about each participant that allowed representation of these persons in written presentation of this data. The completed demographic questionnaires were used to produce Table 6.
First Interview Schedule

The first interview was scheduled at a time convenient for the participants at an on-campus site that was comfortable for them and private enough to ensure confidentiality (i.e., a private office or open classroom). The first interview began with the participant creating a visual and/or written representation of their experience with peer mentorship on their doctoral journey. This was one way of generating thought towards the experiences that the participants have had with peer mentorship in their experience. Moustakas (1994) suggested that phenomenological interviews may often begin with conversation or “a brief meditative activity aimed at creating a relaxed and trusting atmosphere” (p. 114). The creation of this representation by the participant was designed to allow them to think about their experience as a doctoral student or candidate and to create a representation that would show me this experience. I was not expecting beautiful artwork; rather I was attempting to stimulate thought and to create another source of data that represented their experiences as a doctoral student or candidate.

Furthermore, this task was borrowed from a tradition in science education in which students’ images of scientists have been ascertained by asking them to “Draw-A-Scientist” (Barman, 1996, 1997; Bodzin & Gehringer, 2001; Chambers, 1983; Finson, Beaver, & Cramond, 1995; Quita, 2003). The task of asking students to “Draw-A-Scientist” has been used as a diagnostic to find what students think about scientists in general. This has traditionally been used to determine how classroom interventions and experiences could challenge student perceptions of scientists. Furthermore, it has been used by science educators to change negative or stereotypical
views into more realistic views of scientists and the work they do. I did not intend for this test to be a vehicle for changing my participants’ views of their doctoral student experience but instead used it as a diagnostic to find what they have experienced. The question asked to stimulate the visual creation is as follows:

Take a few moments to think about your personal journey as a doctoral student or candidate, on your way towards completing your Ph.D. You may want to capture this visually or with words, whichever is helpful for you. (adapted from Nyquist et al., 1999, p. 18)

After I read the participant these instructions, I allowed them 5 to 10 minutes to create a representation of their doctoral student or candidate experience. The purpose of engaging in this activity with the participants was to capture their experience in a way not possible in a purely verbal form.

Nyquist et al. (1999) found in their research with graduate students that “the drawings and stories they shared with us—midway though our four-year study of their graduate school experiences—provided powerful glimpses into the realities of graduate student lives today” (p. 18). Therefore, as this technique was utilized and found successful in producing data for the Nyquist et al. study, I employed similar technique.

After the participant had completed the visual representation, I turned on the audiotape recorder and I looked at the participant’s visual representation and began to ask questions about this image and/or written document he or she had produced. I asked for clarification and elaboration on the material in an attempt to “focus on the experience, moments of particular awareness and impact, and then to describe the experience fully”
Moustakas (1994) stated that “the phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions” (p. 114). The interview allowed me to listen to the answers provided by the participant but also to probe (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) for further detail. By probing the participant from the main interview questions, I was able to “manage the conversation by regulating the length of answers and degree of detail, clarifying unclear sentences or phrases, filling in missing steps, and keeping the conversation on topic” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 164). Also, I listened for markers and made note of these statements that the participant dropped during the interview that I could return to later. “Markers are important pieces of information that a respondent may offer as they are talking about something else” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 129). I used the following questions developed from my research question on how peer mentorship contributes to the socialization of the doctoral student participant in the first audio-taped interview:

1. Describe your experiences in your doctoral program, especially challenges you have encountered and supports you have used.

Probes include:

a. What experiences have you had in your socialization as a doctoral student?
b. Describe the experiences you have had with your peers and be as specific as possible.

c. Have your peers played a part in these experiences or struggles?

d. How do the interactions you have with your peers make you feel?

2. What are your future plans after you complete your Ph.D.?

   Probes include:

   a. What is your timeline for this process?

   b. Do you expect to maintain contact with any of your doctoral student peers as you move on in your scholarly journey?

3. What other experiences in your doctoral program would you like to discuss?

4. What else do you want to add that I haven’t asked about?

Transcription of each interview was completed for each participant’s first interview as soon after the interview as possible. After the transcription was complete, the transcript was emailed to each participant for member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This allowed the participant to read the transcript for accuracy and allow for discussion prior to and during the follow-up second interview. I also created a narrative summary of the transcript that was presented to the participant in the second interview in order to represent their experiences of socialization through peer mentorship.

**Second Interview Schedule**

The purpose of the second audio-taped 60-minute interview was to find more information about the participants’ experiences with peer mentoring in their doctoral socialization experience as well as to conduct member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
The second interview began with a re-presentation of the visual representation created by the participant in the first interview. The participant was asked the following questions from the visual creation:

1. What thoughts come to mind as you view this representation you created in the first interview?

   Probes include:
   a. Does this appropriately describe your experience in your doctoral journey?
   b. What would you add at this time to this representation?
   c. How do or do your peers not play a part in your doctoral journey?

2. What thoughts came to mind as you read the transcript from the first interview?

   Probes include:
   a. What have you omitted from the descriptions you gave about your experiences?
   b. What would you add to this description?

3. If you could say anything else on your experience with peer mentorship in your doctoral student socialization, what would it be?

   Probes include:
   a. How do you think your peers can better help you in your socialization?
   b. How do you believe you can help other doctoral students?
   c. Would you participate if the University had a formal peer mentorship program?
   d. What would a program like this include?
I next read a summary of the first interview with the participant. I paused at different points to allow for discussion with the participant and for them to clarify or comment on my interpretative narrative. As the summary was read, I encouraged the participant to keep these questions in mind:

1. How do my interpretations of your experiences match up to your actual experiences?

2. Have any features of your experience with peer mentorship towards your socialization as a doctoral student been omitted from this interpretation?

Also, in the second interview, I took the time to address any further questions that I had developed as a result of my analysis of the first interview. The second interview contained clarifying questions unique to each individual participant and I explored specific themes that emerged from my interpretation of the interview, allowed the participant to authenticate these themes, clarified the content from the first interview, as well as provided opportunity for the participant to disclose any further detail on their experiences with peer mentorship in their doctoral student socialization.

**Follow-Up Email Discussions**

A follow-up email was sent to each participant after the second interview had been transcribed as a verification of the themes of both interviews. This allowed me to revisit the purpose of the study but also allowed the participant to reflect on the interviews and provide final input as they saw fit.
**Data Analysis**

This section provides an in-depth overview of how data analysis was conducted. This overview of the data analysis allows the reader to understand how codes and then themes were generated that represent the essence of the experiences of the part-time doctoral students based on the grouping of verbatim statements from the 21 participants. These emergent codes provide an overall representation of the experiences of part-time doctoral students and specifically how they experienced socialization through peer mentorship. Table 8 provides a step-by-step summary of how the entire data analysis process was conducted.

In steps 1 and 2 of the research process the interviews were transcribed and then checked for accuracy and read several times so I would be able to get a “general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). In this way, I was able to remember the context of the conversations I had with the participants and made appropriate notes in my researcher journal (see Appendix F for samples of researcher journals) to coincide with the entry written immediately after the interview (within 24 hours). This led to step 3 in which I engaged in effective memo writing (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) while transcription was occurring. In this way, I kept track of my thinking while I was in the beginning of the analysis phase. Furthermore, I was able to read and re-read the transcripts and find more holistic meaning for the entire interview. Holistic interpretation allows for interpretation of the entire case that “presents description, themes, and interpretations or assertions related to the whole case” (Creswell, 2007, p. 245).
Table 8

Data Analysis Procedure for the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description of Process</th>
<th>Purpose of Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Represent data (interview 1)</td>
<td>Transcribed interview 1 raw data, check for completeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Initial read of data</td>
<td>Got a general sense of data in the transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Re-read data: scan, summarize and memo</td>
<td>Asked questions of data, developed a preliminary list of coding categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Create a narrative for each participant</td>
<td>Wrote the total experience of the individual participant using data from the transcripts and the visual representation created in the first interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Re-read data: sort, summarize and reflect</td>
<td>Searched for regularities and emerging patterns, transformed conceptual categories into working codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Represent data (interview 2), member check</td>
<td>Transcribed interview 2 raw data, checked for completeness, member check with participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Re-read data: recategorize, summarize, reflect</td>
<td>Developed working codes and sub-codes to be extended in analysis of all participants transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Peer debrief</td>
<td>Met with peer debriefer to review emerging codes, refocus coding process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Re-read data set (interviews 1, 2 and visual representation): assign, summarize and reflect</td>
<td>Assigned each unit of data appropriate coding categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Separate and Organize Codes</td>
<td>Separated and organized units of data under each coding category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Review coding categories</td>
<td>Checked to see if the codes address the research question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Peer debrief</td>
<td>Presented data codes to peer debriefer and determined working themes from codes addressing research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Re-read codebooks and narratives for each participant: summarize, condense, develop themes</td>
<td>Separated data into themes that address research question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 8 (continued)

_data analysis procedure for the study_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description of Process</th>
<th>Purpose of Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Display and Describe data</td>
<td>Used thick description to describe participants’ experiences within the context of the themes, wrote composite description (Chapter 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Interpret and Synthesize</td>
<td>Focused on the meaning of the themes and moved from description of finding to implications and interpretations (Chapter 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Peer debrief</td>
<td>Presented Chapter 4-5 to two peers, one a full-time doctoral student, the other a part-time doctoral student to determine if data presented represents their experiences as doctoral students (see Appendices J–K)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** This table provides an overview of the data collection, analysis, display, and interpretation of results for this study.

In step 4, I created a narrative biographical sketch (see Appendix H) that captured the overall experience that each individual participant had with peer mentorship in their doctoral socialization process. This narrative production was produced utilizing both the transcripts as well as the visual representation the participant created in the first interview. In this way, I created a representative narrative of the participants’ experiences using both what they said and how they depicted this in their visual representation. I found it helpful to have both the transcript and the visual representation in front of me as I wrote the narrative. This narrative was shared verbatim with the individual participant in the second interview.
In step 5, I searched for regularities and emerging patterns and transformed conceptual categories into working codes. This process involved looking at all the participants’ first interview transcripts, the visual representation as well as the narratives of their experience to describe their holistic experience both as a part-time doctoral student as well as their experience with peer mentorship. As this work continued, I was able to memo on the data and to reflect on the experiences of these participants and to began to develop codes that were useful in step 7.

In step 6, I conducted the second interview and then transcribed the data, checked for completeness, as well as member checked. The revisiting with the participant in the second interview as well as the follow-up email discussion allowed me to establish the fidelity of the statements I distilled from the transcripts and the narrative descriptions I developed for each participant’s experience. The purpose of the checking and re-checking with the participant was to be sure that I had created trustworthy essences of the experiences these doctoral students had with peer mentorship in their doctoral student socialization (Moustakas, 1994).

In step 7, I engaged in transcript (both interviews one and two) reading and re-reading process, and I highlighted all the significant statements and copied and pasted these statements into separate tables that I created in Microsoft Word that contained a running list of all “statement[s] relevant to the topic and question as having equal value” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118). These significant statements are “sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). These were statements made about topics that overlap for
multiple participants. For example, 15 of the participants spoke about the challenges they experience with peers and all these statements for each of the participants were copied and pasted into a table titled “Challenges with Peers.” These are also called “horizontalized statements” and the addition of these statements to the table continued until there is no longer any repetition of statements and the list was then grouped into “meaning units” which can then be “clustered into common categories” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118). Table 10 provides examples of significant statements that represent their corresponding codes and themes. Tables in Microsoft Word were created separately for each code. Once the codes had been created, I began to generate “textural descriptions of the experience” of peer mentorship in doctoral student socialization which led to “structural descriptions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118). Textural descriptions of the experience “include[d] verbatim examples from the transcribed interview” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). Structural descriptions included the textural description as well as Imaginative Variation which is “to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions” (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 97-98). I was able to refine the horizontalized statements by highlighting on the Microsoft Word tables for statements that later (step 14) led to the final production of the composite description which was the essence of the experience of peer mentorship in doctoral student socialization for each individual participant.
In step 8, a peer debriefer was utilized to review the codes emerged from the data as well as explored the possibility that some codes would be better focused in order to fully understand the experience of the part-time doctoral student. This peer debriefer was an ideal person to undertake this task because she was also a doctoral student and understood the situations of these students. She also had an understanding of the qualitative research process. Furthermore, the peer debriefer was a person to whom I felt comfortable speaking about my data and with whom I had already established rapport. The peer debriefer was given transcripts for select participants, the Microsoft Word data tables with verbatim quotes listed by participant, the narratives for each individual, and copies of the visual representations that were created by the participants in the first interview. The peer debriefer helped me recognize some of the sub-codes that may be hidden within the codes and also helped to explore impediments for part-time doctoral students to peer mentorship. One very important concept noticed by the peer debriefer that I overlooked was the level of undermining between doctoral students and how this serves to prevent peer mentorship and exacerbated isolation of the part-time doctoral student.

For the ninth step of analysis, I examined the narrative biographic sketch developed for each participant and used different colored highlighters and identified similarities and differences in the experiences of each participant. I then identified emerging codes (see Table 9) that are the essence of peer mentorship in doctoral student socialization representing my entire sample. This allowed me to produce a reliable
statement of this experience and facilitated understanding of the collective experiences of the group.

In step 10, data analysis continued as I digitally highlighted verbatim quotes in the transcripts using different colored highlighters for the different codes. A total of 1,003 pages of transcripts were generated from both the first and second interviews with the 21 participants. Due to the large amount of data generated from this study, it was necessary to continue refining the coding procedure as it progressed. Some of the codes got subdivided into smaller sub-codes for ease of handling the substantial data directly from the transcripts. For example, I began highlighting all the statements related to “challenges” experienced by the participants in their doctoral education experience. I later found this code could be subdivided into nine sub-codes including: challenges with faculty, personal challenges, challenges with peers, family challenges, finding a research focus challenge, university challenges, overextended for time, work issues, and financial challenges. Clustering of codes also occurred as can be illustrated with the code of “supports utilized.” I first viewed this code as including faculty support, family support, peer support, colleague, and personal friend support utilized. Later, after reviewing the codes and re-reading the statements copied and pasted into the Microsoft Word data tables, I was able to cluster religious support, cultural role model, work issues, goal driven, and love of learning into the “supports utilized” major code. Table 9 provides a list of the major codes and sub-codes highlighted in the transcripts and then copied and
Table 9

*Codes for Part-Time Doctoral Student Experiences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supports Utilized</th>
<th>Challenges Experienced</th>
<th>Application and Initial Start*</th>
<th>Socialization*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peers*</td>
<td>Personal*</td>
<td>no sub-codes</td>
<td>no sub-codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Peers*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Driven</td>
<td>Time Overextended*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Environment*</td>
<td>Work Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of Learning</td>
<td>University*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentorship*</td>
<td>Research Focus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues*</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends*</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Role Model (African-Americans)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sub-codes are listed in order of importance. The first sub-code listed is most important (participants spoke most frequently about this topic) and subthemes become less important (participants spoke less frequently about this topic) towards the bottom of the list for each code. *Codes that apply directly to the research question.

pasted into Microsoft Word files. Some of the sub-codes do not address the research question directly and have been omitted from discussion of themes in Chapter 4. Only codes identified with an asterisk (*) were clustered into the themes developed in step 13.

In the eleventh step, I revisited my coding strategies as employed in step 10 and determined which codes actually represented the participants' experiences with peer
mentorship. It was found that some of the codes (e.g., faculty, family, love of learning, and goal driven) did not address the research question (question number one) and were set aside as I continued my data analysis procedure. Even though these codes represented issues that were important in the overall experience of the part-time doctoral student, they did not appropriately address the issue of peer mentorship among doctoral students.

In the twelfth step, I employed a separate peer debriefer from the one utilized in step 8. The peer debriefer called upon in this stage of data analysis was a peer with whom I had been in conversation about my data since data analysis commenced in the fall semester of 2010. She was well suited to this role because she was also in the process of analyzing qualitative data for her dissertation and had struggled with articulating themes for her participants within the constructs of her research. This peer debriefer was provided with a sample of my codebooks as well as a draft of Chapter 4 in which I describe the codes that had been highlighted in the transcripts. She was able to help me recognize that the overall themes for all participants relevant to the research question include collegiality versus isolation and identity versus self-doubt. These themes have been distilled from the codes. Creswell (2009) suggested that a researcher “use the coding to generate a small number of themes or categories” that address the research question and can become the “major findings in qualitative studies” (p. 189). Table 10 provides an example of the significant statements within the code of “peer support” and the clustering of these statements under the theme of “collegiality” among doctoral students as examples of peer mentorship. Table 11 (in Chapter 4) provides the themes that have been distilled from the codes in Table 9. These themes are “used to
Table 10

*Examples of Significant Statements and Corresponding Codes and Theme*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
<th>Corresponding Codes</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>There is a group of us through the Doctoral seminar, from the fall, that we kept in contact, along with Dr. Smith, and sometimes (not with him there), but like, we all were still meeting like every-other Wednesday. Even though that is not a class, we just totally need to talk about research. We just meet, talk about some stuff and it has been very, very, very, very, very beneficial. Like, it is probably the most beneficial thing I have had.</td>
<td>Supports Utilized (Peer Support)</td>
<td>Collegiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>I’m fortunate to be in a small cohort of really good people; he’s humbled me and pushed me to think in different ways, so in the classroom setting I’ve been pushed. I’ve been challenged both mathematically and pedagogically; pedagogical content knowledge.</td>
<td>Supports Utilized (Peer Support)</td>
<td>Collegiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Before class we meet upstairs in the café. We eat together and talk and sometimes we all look at each other and say, and if we are confused about something on the syllabus or whatever, we help each other clarify.</td>
<td>Supports Utilized (Peer Support)</td>
<td>Collegiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Since we were in a number of the same classes together, during, before she graduated, you know, she was extremely supportive. We had a research class together, it was Stats III and we would help each other with our projects.</td>
<td>Supports Utilized (Peer Support)</td>
<td>Collegiality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* These participant statements represent comments found in the codebook under “supports utilized” within the subcategory of “peer support” and are clustered within the theme of “collegiality.”
create headings in the findings section” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189) of this study as presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

In the thirteenth step of data analysis, I separated the data coded as the topics listed in Table 9 and condensed them even further into the major themes of collegiality, isolation, identity, and self-doubt as found in Table 11 (Chapter 4). I also highlighted the narratives produced in step 4 with the appropriate themes (collegiality, isolation, identity, and self-doubt). The theme of collegiality refers to the persons who provide the most meaningful peer mentorship for the doctoral student. The theme of isolation addresses the experience that many part-time doctoral students experience as they proceed through doctoral studies which includes barriers that part-time doctoral students have to meaningful peer mentorship. The theme of identity is one that speaks to the development of the doctoral student as scholar and researcher. The experiences of these part-time doctoral students indicate that finding identity as scholar and researcher can be difficult and fleeting especially in light of their present identity as teacher, administrator, adjunct faculty, counselor, exercise physiologist, or homemaker. The final theme of self-doubt includes the feeling that these students have about their ability to complete doctoral studies and to move forward on a career path as scholar and researcher. The theme of self-doubt can often stymie the formation of identity to the role of scholar and researcher.

In step 14 of data analysis, I provided thick description of the experiences these participants have had with peer mentorship towards their socialization as doctoral students. This is represented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation and includes detailed description of how the students experienced peer mentorship and the barriers to these
experiences within the constructs of the participants’ lived experiences. This description of the findings concluded with the presentation of the composite description that brings together the data analysis and provides “a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 182). The composite description has also been described by Creswell. “This passage is the ‘essence’ of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study. It is typically a long paragraph that tells the reader ‘what’ the participants experienced with the phenomenon and ‘how’ they experienced it” (Creswell, 2007, p. 159).

In step 15 of data analysis, I moved beyond presentation of the findings and focused on implications of this research. This is especially important in addressing research question number two in which I attempted to develop theory on the experiences of these participants. The second research question is: How can the experiences of these part-time doctoral students be used to create implications for practice of socialization by peer mentorship? This question was addressed as I moved beyond findings and interpreted and synthesized the composite experience of this group of participants in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

In step 16 of data analysis, I presented Chapters 4 and 5 to two separate peer debriefers who read and considered the manuscript as a representation of their own experiences as doctoral students/candidates. One of the peer debriefers has completed the program as a full-time doctoral student while the other peer debriefer completed the program as a part-time doctoral student. Both of these individuals were different than either of the peer debriefers employed in steps 8 or 12. Each of the peer debriefers in
step 16 where emailed Chapter 4-5 of the dissertation and were asked to "respond in terms of whether and to what extent you see your own experiences accurately reflected in these chapters." This peer debriefing was conducted in an effort to increase the trustworthiness of this study. The responses of these peer debriefers are included in Appendices J-K. Discussion of these responses and their overlap with my experience as a part-time doctoral student are included in Appendix L, the Epilogue to this study.

This research employed a phenomenological research design to analyze the data. This section reviewed the data analysis procedure and also included verbatim examples of data analysis for the reader to better understand how I completed this process. Table 8 provided an overview of the data analysis process presented as a series of steps. Table 9 provided a list of the codes and sub-codes developed in the highlighting process of the data analysis. Table 10 presented an example of how one sub-code (peer support) can be illustrated in participant’s statements as found in the code book. Table 11 (in Chapter 4) presents the themes that emerged from the coded data in this study. The next chapter (Chapter 4) discusses each theme in-depth and provides examples from each participant of how they experienced each theme.

**Trustworthiness**

The idea of trustworthiness is most appropriately articulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for purposes of this study. In their text, they described four criteria that can be used to establish trustworthiness. These include: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.
Credibility

In this study, the five techniques that I use to ensure credibility are my reflective researcher journal and memo writing, viewing the participants’ visual representations, member checking, triangulation, and peer debriefing. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to credibility as being equivalent to the traditional or quantitative notion of internal validity. My reflective journal included all my feelings, thoughts, and experiences with the participants in the one-on-one, in-depth interviews. I was able to view my journal, transcripts, and the visual representations created by the participants concurrently to see how they support or contradict the ideas that the participants were attempting to communicate with me. Member checks occurred after the first interview and during and after the second interview via email. This allowed me to go back to the participants and engage them in discussion about the meanings they assigned to the words they used. Also, when I combined my researcher journal, the member checks from the interviews and the visual representations created by the participants in the first interview, and the narrative biographical sketches that were created after all one-on-one interview data were analyzed, I was able to triangulate the data for credibility. According to Lincoln and Guba, triangulation is possible using different methods within a study. They stated:

The use of different methods for triangulation also has a distinguished history . . . different quasi-designs, while each subject to one or more of the Campbell-Stanley ‘threats,’ may be used in tandem—a kind of triangulation—so that the imperfections of one are cancelled out by the strengths of another. It is as though a fisherman were to use multiple nets, each of which had a complement of holes,
but placed together so that the holes in one net were covered by intact portions of other nets. (p. 306, italics in original)

Triangulation is an essential part of data analysis and this allowed me to move between data methods and to ascertain if they support or refute one another.

My peer debriefers (utilized in steps 8, 12 and 16 of data analysis) met with me after all the in-depth interviews were completed, transcribed, and analyzed. “The task of the debriefer is to be sure that the investigator is as fully aware of his or her posture and process as possible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). The peer debriefers also played “devil’s advocate” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 309) and enabled me to see any of the assumptions that I was holding and how these assumptions were blinding me from seeing the data for what it is.

**Transferability**

In this study, the technique I used to ensure transferability is thick description of my participants’ experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified the idea of transferability as being comparable to external validity in a traditional or quantitative study. Although external validity is not completely possible in a qualitative study, it can allow “someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). The thick description that I produced was the result of the first interview, including the production of the visual description and the follow-up second interview. This allowed me to view my participants’ experiences in retrospect and to find if the transfer of the data to others
is possible. In this way, I have confidence in the transferability of my research results to other similar settings.

Dependability and Confirmability

In this study, the technique I used to ensure dependability and confirmability was the creation of a potential audit trail. This audit trail is described above as a series of 15 steps in the data analysis procedure. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to the notions of dependability and confirmability as compared to the traditional notion of reliability and objectivity. All the documents generated from this study including my researcher journal and memos, the visual representations created by participants, as well as the interview transcripts intact with member checking, can be viewed together to look for dependability and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba identified “the audit trail” as the tool for ensuring dependability and confirmability (p. 328). In this way, all the physical documents produced can be viewed together as a way to maintain the integrity of the research effort.

Limitations

Qualitative research does not seek to generalize to a larger population but instead is interested in “producing culturally situated and theory-enmeshed knowledge through an ongoing interplay between theory and methods, researcher and researched” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 5). This is the case for this study as in any other qualitative research effort. Of course, I attempted to be accountable for establishing trustworthiness in my effort. Nevertheless, the results of this study are constructed by me from within my own cultural perspective and theory-enmeshed position and may still be potentially incomplete and not represent the total experience of all participants. Some of
the experiences of the particular participants in this study may deviate substantially from
one another. However, as I attempt to establish credibility, transferability, dependability,
and confirmability, all the data resulting from this study are still, essentially, a human
construction. However, this is the best human construction I could manage given the
time and situations present but may still be inherently limited in scope of the full
understanding of peer mentorship in doctoral student socialization.

I recruited potential participants using the College’s Doctoral Student Forum
listserv, a listserv which I served as the moderator. Although this may have engendered a
sense of recognition from many of the participants, it may also have created a level of
power relations that I am not cognizant of. For example, some participants may have felt
they needed to provide me with the “right” answers and guide me with answers that they
believed I expected to hear. Some students may have considered my leadership position
as a place of privilege and may have been hesitant to take part in the study due to
preconceived notions they have about the College’s Doctoral Student Forum organization
and the mission of the group. Some participants may already have been connected to a
peer group as part of their experiences with the College’s Doctoral Student Forum, and it
is possible that I may not have received input from those students who were not
previously socialized to doctoral studies.

Another potential limitation of this study is the limited disciplinary background of
these students. All the students in this study were part of the College at the large
university in Northeast Ohio in spring semester 2010. This study did not include
individuals from outside of the college. It may be possible that the experiences of
part-time doctoral students outside of the college (i.e., in the arts and sciences) may be socialized through peer mentorship in a much different way. Therefore, this study can only be transferable to doctoral students in a similar college. A different study would need to be designed to investigate peer mentorship and doctoral student socialization in different academic settings.

Related to the idea of potential individual deviant experiences from the sample is the concept that I chose the statements to be utilized in the phenomenological analysis process. The identification of significant statements from the participants to create the “horizontalizing [of] the data” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118) was my decision and may have inaccurately portrayed the experiences of the participants. Even though I utilized peer debriefers in this process, it is still possible that there may have been misinterpretation of what the participants meant and what they actually said in the interviews.

Finally, I am aware the notion of peer mentorship in doctoral student socialization was taken only from the perspective of the students for purposes of this study. There may potentially be an understanding of this concept that comes from others in the college department including the faculty, staff, and administrative perspectives. These persons’ perspectives are not included in this study and can potentially limit the results that I have constructed.

Summary

This study investigated how part-time doctoral students experience socialization through peer mentorship. I utilized a phenomenological approach to this study and the data sources included two in-depth interviews and the construction of a visual
representation by my participants followed by analysis of the interviews. This process included member checking and peer debriefing and, finally, the writing of a composite description of the essence of educational doctoral student experience with peer mentorship. I made attempts to establish trustworthiness in this study but am aware the constructions I made of the data were subject to my own subjectivity, especially since I was myself a part-time doctoral student at the time of the study. I attempted to create a representation of the essence of these students’ experiences with peer mentorship in their doctoral student socialization in order to understand these students’ experiences. Finally, I created implications for practice (Chapter 5) based on the participants’ experiences with doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship. Theory related to peer mentorship and doctoral student socialization for part-time students has been recognized as a missing component from the scholarly literature and this study attempts to fill this void.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Part-Time Doctoral Student Experience With Peer Mentorship

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the experience part-time doctoral students have with peer mentorship towards their socialization. The two major themes that have emerged from the data are collegiality and isolation. Although these themes have some discrete components and seem in many ways to be different and opposite ends of a dichotomy, there is some overlap in the experiences of the participants. Figure 5 has been created to illustrate the experiences of the participants. This diagram is a Venn style diagram and identifies the differences between some parts of the experience but also the overlapping nature of some of the experiences. The experience with peer mentorship for part-time doctoral students is neither linear nor dichotomous. Indeed at many times part-time doctoral students may be experiencing collegiality and isolation concurrently. In other ways, some experiences that are collegial may in fact contribute to isolation. The nature of the part-time doctoral experience is part and parcel to the dynamic experience of being a doctoral student.

I attempt to practice reflexivity as I discuss each theme and subcomponent by acknowledging how my experience aligns with the participants and in other cases did not resonate with my experiences as a part-time doctoral student. Throughout each section I reveal my experience and indicate this by italicizing certain key phrases of my experience. This process makes my experience transparent to the reader and allows
Figure 5. Relationships among themes and subthemes of part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship including the interplay of participants’ experiences coded from the data.

recognition of my insider perspective as well as my potential biases and preconceptions in conducting this research effort.

Table 11 provides an outline of the narrative presentation of the themes and the subcomponents of each. Near the end of the chapter, I provide a summary or a composite
description of the peer mentorship experience of part-time doctoral students. I present this composite description as the essence of the part-time doctoral student experience with peer mentorship (Moustakas, 1994). The reason for my presentation of the composite description is to provide “the reader ‘what’ the participants experienced with the phenomenon [peer mentorship towards their socialization] and ‘how’ they experienced it (i.e., the context)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 159).

At the close of the chapter, I provide a narrative description of Figure 5 and a summary of the discussion of the interrelationships of the themes and subthemes for the experience of the part-time doctoral student with peer mentorship. Explanation of the positioning of the subcomponents of each category will be discussed as will the reasoning for the relative positioning of the components within the circles of the diagram. Figure 5
provides the reader with the major contributions this research makes to the existing literature. This conceptualization of the socialization of part-time doctoral students through peer mentorship provides the essence of the experiences of the research participants.

**Collegiality**

The theme of Collegiality emerged from descriptions of how part-time doctoral students experience socialization through peer mentorship relationships. This includes educative mentoring, nurturing mentoring, and dyadic co-mentoring. One of the purposes of this research is to determine the experience of peer mentorship provided by doctoral student peers. However, workplace colleagues as well as personal friends provide important and significant socialization and peer mentorship experiences for the research participants. Relationships with workplace colleagues and personal friends provide similar essential mentorship experiences as do doctoral student peers albeit in environments separate from the university. Part-time doctoral students experience greater daily interaction with workplace colleagues and personal friends therefore they are the peers they call upon for mentorship even though they are outside the university. In this section, I consider the essence of the experiences provided by the numerous peers whom impact the socialization of the part-time doctoral student.

The first subcategory within collegiality is educative mentoring. Educative mentoring (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Aston & Molassiotis, 2003) has been described as an important component of mentoring functions. This subcategory includes the experiences of part-time doctoral students with their peers that provide educational
function, usually about academic content. These experiences are generally ephemeral and may only occur within a limited time frame or within specific circumstances (i.e., coursework requirement discussions). However, these experiences can be powerful and noted as most beneficial to the part-time doctoral student. The educative mentoring experience provided by the peers of the part-time doctoral student can go far to provide needed academic information and improve self-efficacy thus assisting them in developing their scholarly identity.

The second subcategory within collegiality is nurturing mentoring. Nurturing has been described as an important component of mentoring functions (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Aston & Molassiotis, 2003). This subcategory includes the experiences of part-time doctoral students with their peers that provide emotional or psychological support towards their doctoral studies. These experiences provide the part-time doctoral student with encouragement thus improving self-efficacy and enabling them to continue working on their doctorate even in the face of challenges and adversity. These peers provide support that is the result of sharing philosophies or mindsets, sharing similar work environment or an insider perspective for the individual doctoral student as shared by personal friends. Regardless of the relationship with the individual, nurturing mentoring provides the doctoral student with needed emotional and psychological support towards developing their scholarly identity.

The third subcategory within collegiality includes dyadic co-mentoring; the experience most akin to traditional peer mentoring relationships. However, the relationships detailed below do not truly meet the definition of a more experienced peer
mentoring a less experienced peer. In each of the two dyads presented, the peers were at similar phases of doctoral study. In both cases of dyadic mentoring described these relationships were forged during the coursework phase of the doctoral journey. These relationships qualify as peer mentoring relationships because they provide essential educative and nurturing components within the same relationship. These relationships allow both participants to experience improved self-efficacy in the process of negotiating their scholarly identity. In both dyads presented, the peers act as developers within the social network and provide significant psychosocial socialization experiences for one another.

**Educative Mentoring**

For purposes of this discussion, experiences with supportive educative mentoring peers are addressed as related to collegiality. Later in this chapter, discussion of the impact of doctoral student peers on feelings of isolation is presented. Educative mentoring includes “basic behaviors associated with teaching, including: modeling, informing, confirming/disconfirming, prescribing and questioning” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40). In terms of doctoral student peer mentoring, this will likely include some communication in regards to coursework or dissertation, usually related to academic content or process of research. In my own experience as a doctoral student, *I found my peers to be very supportive* and on many occasions they provided important feedback on my work as well as provided important psychosocial support. All 21 participants indicated peers have played an important part in their doctoral student socialization. When speaking about peer mentorship, participants identified small groups
or “little cohorts” that formed as a result of class projects as valuable resources for socialization. *My own doctoral education experience with a cohort of peers* during my coursework provided me with valuable experience in designing and conducting an authentic research project which substantially prepared me for my dissertation work as well as improved my self-efficacy towards this endeavor.

The experience of being involved in a small group of doctoral student peers for support in doctoral studies was indicated by 9 of the 21 participants. These participants indicated that some of the most beneficial mentorship came from small, professor-led groups having a specific objective established by the professor from the outset of group meetings. For example, Tina exemplified this concept:

There is a group of us through the Doctoral seminar, from the fall, that we kept in contact, along with Dr. Jones, and sometimes (not with him there) . . . We just meet, talk about some stuff and it has been very, very, very, very beneficial. Like, it is probably the most beneficial thing I have had.

Tina felt this group of students along with Dr. Jones was facilitating her growth as a scholar and thus has improved her self-efficacy. Phyllis, like Tina, described her experience with a professor-led group of students conducting an authentic scholarly research project:

I feel like this group has been an initiation in the sense of, a very guided, scaffolded initiation into what it means to be a researcher, and to work with other people who have the same interests as you do, but we all have different time schedules and conflicts, but we make it work. We work as a team.
Other doctoral students found that group projects that were a necessary part of coursework created a place for growth and understanding of what it means to be a scholar. For example, Donald like Tina and Phyllis described his experience with a small group of fellow doctoral students:

We did do some presentations at conferences and went to AERA with one of those papers . . . It is rare in a small class, I think there were only five of us in this little seminar and [the professor] taught it and we worked so well together, we were just cranking out stuff. It was a wonderful thing . . . It was really good because it was still early in my program and there were people around . . . that I really enjoyed working with them and it was a lot of fun and we were learning a lot.

Half of the participants found one-on-one peer mentorship very beneficial. These experiences of working with one other individual peer (within a short time-frame as compared to the extended time-frame of dyadic co-mentoring) created opportunities to be engaged in scholarly work that would not occur for the participant working in isolation thus allowing negotiation of scholarly identity while improving their self-efficacy. These relationships occurred spontaneously for most of the participants and were generally not long-persisting relationships. Most of this mentoring was limited to specific functions (e.g., working on a conference presentation, finding employment, receiving assistance in a specific course). Even though these mentorship functions seem very different, they were always related to learning something of importance that the part-time doctoral student had not considered prior to the suggestion by a peer. In my own doctoral student
experience (as described in Chapter 1) *I found tremendous mentorship from my one-on-one relationships with my peers.* Similarly, Elmer noted:

> My friend has invited me to think about working with him on a project, maybe in a year, and kind of combining some of his [disciplinary] stuff with some of [my disciplinary] stuff. And maybe doing a paper together or presentation together and going out somewhere and doing that.

On a more practical side, peer mentorship led to a job opportunity for Penny as she stated:

> One of my classmates actually gave a recommendation for me, and it was one of the people who said, “You need to apply for this one [job].” And I would never even have thought about it.

Andrew remembered a peer from early in his experience that provided him with educative support:

> Since we were in a number of the same classes together, during, before she graduated, you know, she was extremely supportive. We had a research class together, it was Stats III and we would help each other with our projects.

Peer networks are often reference groups that an individual student can call upon to receive guidance. Oftentimes these groups are composed of three to five fellow doctoral students. These groups come together spontaneously as a result of a specific course or project. For example, Kim found the educative mentorship she received from her peers to be helpful in terms of finding scholarly references. She remembered:
In fact, June has found so many references for me, links and books and citations and things on Queer Theory and all of that stuff and I found journal articles for Cindy because she is doing ELL stuff.

Other important peer mentorship experiences helpful in negotiating scholarly identity include time spent planning for and attending conferences (Doris), exchange of job recommendations (Penny), and formation of study groups (Julia). Although these activities are important and significant, they are ephemeral and usually only occur as occasional instances, usually for one semester.

One of the keys to meaningful educative peer mentorship is that it occurred outside of regularly scheduled class time. Greater opportunity to interact with peers provided greater educative benefit to the student. Some of the activities in which participants engaged with peers outside of class time included the following:

- class project conducted all day outside of scheduled class time (Penny)
- study or research groups (Julia, Jennifer, Tina, Kim, Phyllis)
- attending professional conferences (Doris, George)

Participants recognized that the key part of this mentorship was to have some direct relationship to their doctoral studies and benefit them academically and professionally. In other words, educative mentorship needs to facilitate the negotiation of scholarly identity. This mentorship provided the participant with the opportunity to develop as a scholar and provide socialization to the academy. As Elmer stated:

I am looking for those people that I really can have a good conversation with and

I am looking for those people that are working on projects that are aligned with
mine as opposed to just somebody in class or hanging out. I don’t have time for that.

Elmer’s comments indicate the overlap between finding important peer mentors within his social network while also minimizing the time he invests in superfluous interactions. For these participants, engaging in meaningful work with peers is an essential part of developing scholarly behavior. As Doris said:

That network means a lot. And that’s where, that’s something that I would say I think any Ph.D. program needs to facilitate; developing those networks. At least be the infancy of it. At least be the bud.

Abby similarly commented,

I suppose any socialization that I have had has probably come from peers. I mean, peers are who told me how to get a parking pass, where to park; what VISTA was. I mean, they’ve answered all those sorts of basic questions . . . I mean, that’s how we kind of network at least from my standpoint.

Workplace colleagues provided educative mentoring for 12 of the 21 participants on some level. Most of the colleagues were people the participants were working with in their careers at the time of the study. Sometimes, colleagues in the workplace may even become doctoral student peers. In my own doctoral student experience, I did not receive mentorship from workplace colleagues. Generally my workplace colleagues “tuned out” when I started talking about doctoral studies so typically I would not talk about my experiences at work unless I was asked directly about my coursework and/or dissertation, which did not happen very often. However, many of the participants found educative
support from their workplace colleagues who also became doctoral students or who had been doctoral students. For example, Jennifer exemplified this when she related that she “convinced somebody” who she works with to begin coursework with her at the same time. In this way, Jennifer was able to engage in conversation with the colleague both in and out of class and this improved her self-efficacy in the early days of her doctoral studies. She remembered:

We didn’t take all of our classes together, but it was nice already having somebody I knew so that we could come back and talk about it or talk about assignments . . . I’m not one to easily make friends with others or really get to know people really quickly unless they approach me. So, it was nice knowing somebody.

Donald mentioned a friend that he sometimes worked with at the public school who provided him with support because he had already been through the Ph.D. and could give insight into the process and what it takes to succeed.

**Summary of Educatve Mentoring**

Educatve mentoring provided the participants with specific guidance in terms of academic tasks they needed to complete. Many of these mentorship activities were ephemeral, generally persisting for one semester or connected to a specific course or project within doctoral studies. However, the educative element of this mentorship was significant for these participants and provided needed guidance toward developing scholarly identity and improved their self-efficacy.
Nurturing Mentoring

All 21 of the participants spoke about one-on-one peer mentorship with one individual doctoral student peer. Many of these nurturing relationships with peers resulted due to the respect that they have for the thinking of the individual or the sharing of viewpoints or philosophies. In nurturing mentoring, the “nurturer helps provide an environment for growth, considers the total personality of the person being nurtured in deciding how best to be helpful” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40). Eight of the participants believed much of the doctoral student peer mentorship to be trivial and generally occurring only within the construct of a particular class and usually persisting for one semester. As a doctoral student I had often experienced similar connections with some doctoral student peers only to find once the semester ended, the relationships would also end.

For these participants, mentorship with peers did not develop beyond the scope of an individual course and this is why they are considered trivial mentorship. However, the 13 participants who met outside of regular class time found the most nurturing support from an individual peer or groups of peers. This support often improved the self-efficacy of the part-time doctoral student while negotiating their scholarly identity. Four of the participants regularly attended and benefited from the College’s Doctoral Student Forum group and experienced substantial mentorship in terms of time spent and the quality of conversations with peers from outside of their program of study at these sessions. Since the Doctoral Student Forum group was critically important to my own development as a scholar, I can understand (as well as hear this from participants) the
benefit these students experienced; in many ways it *improved my self-efficacy as it served as my major source of nurturing peer mentorship* in my socialization as a doctoral student. Some participants like Matthew indicated a nurturing as well as educative experience with a peer that he has great respect for.

I think that first of all, I’ve been humbled by one of them [doctoral student peer]. I think that this person is an absolutely wonderful thinker. He’s extremely bright and he has pushed my own thinking.

One of the keys to meaningful nurturing peer mentorship is that it occurred outside of regularly scheduled class time. Greater opportunity to interact with peers provided greater benefit to the student. Some of the activities in which participants engaged with peers outside of class time included the following:

- meeting before class for food and discussion (Kim)
- social networking like Facebook or LinkedIn (Kelly, Kim, Donald, Abby)
- attending College’s Doctoral Student Forum sessions (Doris, Donald, Phyllis, Julia)
- e-mail (Abby, Kim, Matthew, Jan, Doris, George, Jo Ann, Elmer)

Donald described his experience with a small group of doctoral students working outside of class time researching a particular topic of interest as part of his coursework. He stated:

The thought collective . . . That’s really what that was. It was so generative this whole thought collective. We didn’t have to work at it. There were no rules or regs, and we didn’t set up a plan as to how to behave or anything. I don’t even
remember any ground rules being laid down. We cared for one another a lot. I think that there was . . . taking care of each other.

Similarly, Phyllis indicated the following about her experience with peers; “we have this as our core but we also are socially supportive of one another, because we understand the outside time constraints.” She went on to describe this experience as

It was a group of people . . . who understand where you are, who don’t judge and who just sort-of offer . . . realistic support. Like it is not, sometimes I have gotten support from people and it is almost delusional support really. Be honest with me because somebody else is going to say it far uglier than you. You know, I would rather hear it from you. It is just sort-of, a safety net is just like a cheerleading squad.

Eddy believed that it was important to connect with other teachers in his workplace (a public school) and this helped support his doctoral studies. He believed that “we kind of create almost a community in schools where people who are pursuing advanced degrees; they are kind of on the outside.” For a public school teacher and doctoral student like Eddy, the mentorship he received in the workplace from fellow doctoral students (even if they were not in the same plan of study) allowed him to experience collegiality that allowed him to feel part of the academy while maintaining employment outside of the university.

The participants who were working at a university or college had a tendency to rely heavily on workplace colleagues to support their doctoral studies as well as in negotiating their scholarly identity. For example, Abby, Jo Ann, Julia, Jennifer, and
Olivia all relied on colleagues in the workplace to help navigate doctoral studies. Jo Ann noted, “I have to find my support here or in my work environment” because she will not find support elsewhere to support her doctoral studies. Abby similarly noted: “That’s a better peer network group for me, because I’m there more [work]. You know, it’s just logistics. I’m there more, I know those people more because those are the people I work with every day.”

Seven of the 21 participants find mentorship for their doctoral studies from personal friends. In my own doctoral student experience, *I did not receive substantive mentorship from friends*. Indeed, many friends I socialized with before I began my doctoral coursework are *no longer a part of my personal social network*. This may be due to the lack of time I had to interact with those people or the change in my priorities and interests. Most participants, however, expressed a deep appreciation for the nurturing mentorship that personal friends provide in their doctoral student experience. For example, Amy (a single doctoral student) was adamant that friends really were the most important emotional mentorship because in many cases, it seemed like no one else was interested. She noted: “It has only been through friends, people I’ve known for a really long time who know me, who have seen me through . . . And there are very few; there are only like three of them, which is fine.” Jo Ann similarly remembered a friend who sparked her interest in academia that she worked with a long time ago in the ICU in the hospital. She remembered:

This friend that I mentioned, who knew she wanted to be a Ph.D. early on . . . And I was very excited for her, and she said, you know, have you ever thought about
it? And I said absolutely not. And I have actually followed her, not intentionally, but when she left that school of nursing, I ended up taking her position there, and so anyway, I taught. I started teaching.

In a similar way Elmer relied on a friend for nurturing and educative mentorship who was actually a doctoral student as well in a different program of study within the college. He related some of his experience:

I’ve got my buddy down the street that I’ve been able to go, what the heck is going on with this? . . . So he’s been in that more for me, more than anybody up here because I have just had limited time on campus.

More than anything, the participants believe that friends oftentimes provided nurturing mentorship that improved their self-efficacy. Phyllis articulated this when she said, “I think it has to be rooted in friendship. It really has to be rooted in ‘I care about you’ as a human and secondarily we share this interest in education.” Similarly, Amy noted, “friends come to the rescue. [They say] ‘You can do it, it’s alright. You have the strength. You can do it. You’ve got what it takes.’”

**Summary of Nurturing Mentoring**

The experience of nurturing mentoring toward doctoral studies is an important component of collegiality. Nurturing takes on an emotional and psychological component that supports the part-time doctoral student. This nurturing can be provided by other doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues, or personal friends. Regardless of the person providing the support, the nurturing nature of the relationship provided the participant with improved self-efficacy as they negotiated their scholarly identity.
Dyadic Co-Mentoring

Dyadic co-mentoring is mentorship between two doctoral student peers (e.g., Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000) that is reciprocal and mutual as well as continuing over substantial time, usually more than the traditional college semester. These long-term educative and nurturing relationships exist between two specific individuals and generally evolve over time. In both cases, described below, the participants provided one another with support in negotiating scholarly identity and worked to improve one another’s self-efficacy. During my own doctoral student experience, I had a number of doctoral student peers who became long-term partners who served as critical friends. However, I do not believe I ever developed the level of friendship as exemplified by two pairs of participants in their significant dyadic co-mentoring relationships. These relationships were reported by Jennifer and Olivia, as well as by Amy and Linda. Both pairs of participants were enrolled in the same School within the College (School 2). Jennifer and Olivia were at the same stage of the process of doctoral studies (both in dissertation phase), while Amy and Linda were at different phases of doctoral study (Amy was in dissertation phase while Linda was in the coursework phase). These relationships nicely illustrate the different experiences of co-mentorship and the benefits to be had by both parties involved.

Jennifer and Olivia connected in the coursework phase of their doctoral program and were able to provide one another with educative mentoring in areas of academic weakness. For example, Jennifer remembered:
In another math class, we took like three, so I think in the last one . . . So, I think I’m speaking for her [Olivia] but I think she kind of drew on my knowledge of the theory related to child development and things like that. And I relied on her for a lot of the content.

Olivia reported on the nurturing element of the mentorship.

Jennifer, for me, is like that person I go to. She does not feel like she is an authority. She is that person that we are sharing the similar experience. Lament some of the things we are dealing with, but also, excited about things that are going well.

Jennifer and Olivia both described their more recent relationship as being “dissertation buddies.” They worked together in preparing their dissertation proposals and regularly met to discuss pieces they had written or met to discuss “burning questions” related to their writing. Jennifer described a typical meeting between the two:

So if we said, “Okay, I’m going to have 10 pages written on this,” then, that’s what I had to bring. And she would have her goal . . . But the point of it was that we would set the date and we knew that when we met we had to have what we had. And then so as a little added kicker because we were both like, “Okay, promise me you’ll kick me in the butt,” was basically what we said to each other.

Olivia remembered:

I would read her paper, she would read my paper. It has always been a very comforting and easy path . . . Jennifer has been more one-on-one; we are
experiencing the same thing at the same time. Sort of dreading and you know all that sort of stuff.

The relationship between Jennifer and Olivia was described by both as “friendship.” In both cases, they provide one another with educative and nurturing support that improved their self-efficacy as they negotiated scholarly identity. Olivia believed:

I like the idea of sharing and, my perspective, friends, very easy to communicate with, similar interests, and it just seemed like a natural fit. For us, it was just a matter of having good conversation, helping each other along the way.

Jennifer took note that “and again it wasn’t just intellectual support. It was emotional support. What keeps me most motivated is Olivia.” Both women believe that they will continue this relationship into the future after they complete their dissertations. They both look forward to future collaborative research efforts and the opportunities that they will have to present at future conferences and write for publication. Olivia believes the success of the relationship lies in mutual respect as people, as learners, and as teachers. She recounted: “For me, it was nice to be held accountable to somebody who I knew wasn’t going to pressure me too heavily, but for me, it was important to make sure that I wasn’t wasting her time.” Jennifer similarly believed “I think it’s important that the person you’re working with is pushing you and making you accountable for you getting done what you said you were going to get done.” Near the end of the first interview, Olivia expressed with emotion in her voice, “I love Jennifer. Oh yeah, no doubt [we will stay in contact].”
Amy and Linda connected through a Curriculum Leadership Institute (CLI) they both attended rather than through coursework like Jennifer and Olivia. They were able to be involved in an educative cohort for the CLI, and through their work together, they developed a deep bond that transcended the immediate work for the Institute. Linda remembered:

As soon as we met each other there we became pretty best friends and very quickly . . . I was just impressed by her knowledge and her confidence and, you know, things like that, just who she was.

Amy realizes that she has been very supportive and nurturing of Linda and has offered her advice because she is further along in the program. Amy and Linda both feel that Amy has taken on more of a dominant mentor role and Linda believes she is most definitely the mentee in the relationship. Amy recounted:

I’ve been a lot of support for her . . . Mostly the support with her has been talking about all the curriculum and instruction stuff . . . all the course work. You know, “I feel so stupid now. Let’s talk about it.” And that has helped me feel like I’m still in the program. ’Cause once the course work is over, we’re gone.

One of the areas where Linda believes she has benefited most from the relationship with Amy is in learning a particular methodology that she will be using for her dissertation study. Linda mentioned the educative mentoring she experienced:

When we talk about Q [methodology]. Because we’re both going to do a Q study. And so she said . . . she introduced me to it, and she said, “You’re just going to
have to. This is what you’re going to have to do: You’re going to have to read more Q studies.” I should have thought of that.

Even though Amy feels she is further along in her doctoral studies, she has also benefited from the relationship in ways she did not expect. She stated:

Linda has been very, very supportive because we’ve had the same teachers, taken the same courses, and she can talk the discourse and such and I understand . . . So in that regard, that aspect of my sanity, she has been really helpful talking the same language together.

Dyadic co-mentoring provided both doctoral students in the experience a nurturing and educative relationship that improved their self-efficacy throughout the negotiation of scholarly identity. Linda even remembered being with Amy at a conference in New York City and felt “we just met and hung out in New York City. It was just fun.”

**Summary of Dyadic Co-Mentoring**

The two dyads described above acted as long-term peer mentors for one another. These relationships included both an educative and nurturing function that are significant mentoring functions. The two pairs of women described their experiences as being a friendship rooted in the negotiation of their scholarly identity in academic programs but also similar mindset and interest in improving another’s self-efficacy to complete the doctorate.

**Summary of Collegiality**

Collegiality includes experiences doctoral students have with peer mentoring that are either educative or nurturing or both that facilitate socialization to the role of scholar.
These experiences tend to provide the part-time doctoral student with efficacious experiences toward their doctoral socialization to the role of scholar. Educative mentoring experiences include sharing of academic content and giving and receiving assistance with these topics. Nurturing mentoring experiences include emotional and/or psychological support given by peers. Oftentimes educative and nurturing mentoring experiences originate from different individuals (doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues or personal friends) and are not necessary encountered together in a relationship with one other individual. Dyadic co-mentoring is a powerful form of peer mentoring in which a pair of doctoral students shares both educative and nurturing co-mentoring; this is the form of peer mentoring most akin to traditional peer mentorship. In all cases of positive peer mentoring these experiences create a more efficacious doctoral student as they negotiate their scholarly identity.

**Isolation**

Isolation includes barriers that part-time doctoral students experience as they navigate doctoral studies and most significantly how they perceive isolation from others at the university. These perceptions and experiences can create expectations for part-time doctoral students that they are “second tier” doctoral students or that they are unable to be as generative in their scholarship as other doctoral students (especially full-time doctoral students) because “life gets in the way.” Part-time doctoral students are dedicated to career, family and other professional obligations that will differ compared to the full-time doctoral student. Furthermore, feelings of being second tier students can be exacerbated by a lack of self-efficacy and vice versa.
The first subcategory with isolation is the notion of “second tier” doctoral students was identified by Donald when he was speaking of part-time doctoral students as “second tier people [have to be] a little more aggressive about the kind of networking we want to do.” He went on later to describe that developing lasting relationships with peers is very difficult to manage because part-time doctoral students lack time on campus to be in conversation with other doctoral students and faculty. Interestingly, Donald noted the lack of social interaction between part-time doctoral students was missing and this was part of the problem. In reality, part-time doctoral students may in some cases experience more social interaction than do full-time doctoral students (see Appendix K on a full-time doctoral student experience). However, the perception that other doctoral students experience privilege that is missing in the part-time doctoral student experience is very much a reality for these students. Thus part-time doctoral students feel “second tier” when compared with other doctoral students.

The second subcategory of isolation is the notion that “life gets in the way.” This perception comes from Joey when he was describing his limitations as a doctoral student when he noted “running for election really put a crimp in things . . . having a health problem, it has just been one of those things where life just gets in the way.” Many of the participants in this study expressed concerns with the time constraints of being a full-time professional combined with being a doctoral student. Much of the time constraints emerge from holding a full-time job outside of the university while engaged in doctoral study and the perception that peers do not have time for relationships with one another. Several participants noted a concern that the part-time doctoral student is constantly
“treading water” and does not have time to fully commit oneself to scholarly pursuits. This all leads to isolation from other doctoral students and the inability to be truly generative as a scholar.

**Second Tier Doctoral Students**

Fifteen of the participants in this study noted challenges they experienced in their interactions with peers, a vast majority of these comments related to the perception of the “privilege” that is enjoyed by full-time doctoral students and eight of these 15 participants specifically indicated that in some way, they felt lesser of a doctoral student than they would if they were able to pursue doctoral studies as a full-time venture. These feelings of second tier status can create a lack of part-time doctoral student’s self-efficacy and undermine the development of scholarly identity. The term “second tier” comes specifically from Donald in his comments on the need for part-time doctoral students to be more aggressive in pursuing scholarly relationships. I have *myself been guilty of this sense of second tier status and the perception that as a part-time doctoral student, I was lesser of a student* than my full-time counterparts. Furthermore, I had also believed that *full-time students experience some intangible privilege* that I did not receive. Even though I was the lead coordinator for the Doctoral Student Forum for several years, I still always felt that by pursuing my doctorate *as a part-time student I was missing out* on some important experiences, many of which *I believe to have taken place in the central GA office or in spontaneous interactions full-time doctoral students had with faculty on campus*. In reality, my position as the lead coordinator for the student organization probably gave me greater presence on campus than many full or part-time doctoral
students and it is possible I experienced a socialization more akin to a full-time student than many part-time doctoral students experience.

An important issue that emerged from eight of the participants’ experiences was the belief (even if it is not reality) that full-time doctoral students within the college experience privilege that the part-time students do not enjoy leading to a sense of isolation. Much like Donald, Matthew expanded on this idea from the perspective of a K-12 teacher when he stated:

I also think that they [full-time doctoral students] feel like even though the letters after our name will still be the same as theirs in the end, they feel that their experience of being a Graduate Assistant just makes them more qualified. Better, they understand the milieu of higher [education] and how that all works. They are going to be more generative in terms of publishing, because we were teaching while they were actually being a doctoral student.

Julia regretted her lack of interaction with other doctoral students when she indicated:

So they have an office next door, and you [full-time student] can just go there and talk about stuff, which you know, you kind of miss out as a part-time student. You don’t get that just talking about stuff in the middle of the day when it pops in your head or something.

Andrew followed this up when he stated:

So these GAs, you know, like this study that I am helping Dr. White with, it is his idea. Who do you think did the IRB stuff? Our group did the IRB stuff and I don’t begrudge Dr. White because you know what, when he was a grad student,
he did the same shit for people. That is how you get good at it but I don’t have that experience because I am not here. I commute, I am not a GA . . . I know some of the GAs but don’t have any type of real interaction with them.

Similarly, Kelly indicated that she did not experience much interaction with the full-time GA students because she “went to class and went home” afterwards. She later indicated she did not “develop those social relationships” because of her part-time student status. This perceived barrier to developing relationships with peers goes far to create an isolating experience for a part-time doctoral student who will experience lesser benefit from educative and nurturing mentoring relationships. Jan also felt as though she did not develop relationships with peers and indicated that she could not “count [any peers] as friends.” For these participants, developing relationships with peers was a challenge and as Joey indicated, he found “teamwork [with peers] can be a problem” as a result of his isolation from others. Similarly, Linda indicated, “sometimes it’s good, sometimes it was not so good. But it still was challenging [with peers].”

These students, including Matthew, Jan, Joey, Linda, Kelly, Julia, Andrew, and Donald, assume that there is some inherent benefit to being a full-time doctoral student. Even the part-time doctoral student peer debriefer utilized in data analysis (see Appendix J) had the experience of feeling less proficient (than a full-time student) as a part-time student. Many part-time doctoral students maintain the perception that full-time doctoral students are more productive and better socialized to the academy than part-time students. They believe they are missing opportunities to network with their doctoral student peers and this creates barriers to developing and maintaining meaningful peer
mentorship relationships thus contributing to feelings of a lack of self-efficacy ultimately leading to isolation of the part-time doctoral student.

Summary of Second Tier Doctoral Students

Part-time doctoral students can feel isolated from their peers when engaged in doctoral studies because they perceive (even if it is not reality) that full-time doctoral students enjoy some privilege, which they do not receive. These same students can find themselves missing out on developing mentoring relationships with other doctoral students due to a lack of time to engage in conversation with others or due to lack of self-efficacy and inability to develop substantive relationships. Both of these situations combined can result in part-time doctoral students as considering themselves second tier doctoral students, which undermines their scholarly development.

Life Gets in the Way

Thirteen of the participants discussed their lack of time to complete the myriad tasks that need to be accomplished as a part-time doctoral student who holds a full-time job outside the university. In other words, they have identified the ways that “life gets in the way” of doctoral studies. Similarly, Phyllis indicated that “there are things in life that just happen” that may restrict the experience of being a doctoral student. In my experience as a part-time doctoral student who holds a full-time teaching position, I also struggled with finding the time to complete all the work required for my doctoral studies. Sadly, I know in many cases I have sacrificed excellence in my doctoral work for mere completion of assignments (a situation that frustrates me when I see it in my own students). However, through my work as the lead coordinator for the Doctoral Student
Forum, I found the *time invested to be worth the tradeoffs and sacrifices* I made elsewhere. Many of the participants worked between 40 and 50 hours a week and added their doctoral studies on top of those working hours. Many of these same participants balanced family obligations, full-time work and other professional commitments (e.g., leading a statewide professional conference, president of local educational association, other work commitments, etc.) with doctoral studies. One participant even noted, “it’s a bit of a load.” All of these factors led to further feelings of isolation from doctoral student socialization and from their ability to develop mentoring relationships with peers. For example, Matthew noted, “it’s just been a matter throughout this entire process of keeping my head above water” because he wears “many, many hats” in regards to his doctoral studies, his work and his commitments as a leader for his professional educational association. Similarly, George noted:

> I’m treading water right now with my coursework, you know? So, you know, “Hey you should submit this paper, you should work on this and do more with this and present it, or submit it for a proposal to present it somewhere.” Not going to happen. It’s not going to happen right now. [laughs] I’m treading from week to week, I’m getting by.

Doris indicated similar concern about lack of time to write:

> Not in this realm [have not written for publication]. And I wish I could have had the opportunity to do more. And that’s where I think more faculty interaction would have helped. You know, with the part-timers such as me.
The lack of time to complete required assignments and lack of time to establish relationships with other students created a sense of isolation from their doctoral studies. Matthew discussed numerous barriers to establishing relationships with peers and one of the key barriers was in finding time to engage in conversations. He commented:

I remember saying to one of my math [education] colleagues like, “Can you stay ten minutes, I’ve got an idea to run past you.” And the answer, very kindly, was, “No. I’ve got to get home.” And so, these are things that are really tough.

Similarly, Donald related his experience of isolation from peers due to a lack of time when he stated:

It is very difficult to develop lasting relationships when you are doing it like this [part-time] because everybody just wants to get home at this time of night . . . Everybody comes in, you got a job to do, you get it done. You got a hundred other things to do when you go home . . . but it has a downside because you don’t often go out for a brewski after class and chat or go have something to eat or hang out.

Eddy spoke about barriers to finding the time to create peer groups that are recommended for doctoral students when he related:

Sometimes you feel like you are burdening them [peers] because they have to write their own stuff and you are “hey, can you read this too?” while you are at it. And so I mean, that can be a challenge too.

Other participants blamed themselves for their isolation from their peers because they did not take the time to initiate relationships. Julia commented, “I know it’s
partially me not stepping out and doing it. So, I understand that part.” Other students felt their position as a part-time student removed them from the educative and nurturing peer mentorship relationships. For example, Andrew indicated that because he did not have time to interact with his peers, he felt:

Because I am a commuter student, I know some of the GAs but don’t have any type of real interaction with them. I don’t even know them well enough to know if they are working on their Master’s or their Ph.D.

Some of the participants indicated that they have very tightly scheduled lives and have to work diligently to complete the many tasks in their responsibility. Linda, who worked “65+ hours per week” outside of the university and balanced caring for her special needs adult children at home, related:

Well, every moment I have. I just went to the library. I got all kinds of books. I have study time set aside. I’m going to go to the library to get into the journals because I’m out of books right now but I need to get the journals.

Penny similarly noted, “I literally go home, go to work, and do homework. Like, that’s pretty much the balance that I have. These three things run my life.” These participants felt like they did not have time for everything they needed to do and they felt very isolated from their doctoral student peers. It was a difficult balancing act for some, like Julia, when she admitted “my stress is when I’m trying to balance work, life, and school. That’s where the stress comes in.” Or simply stated by George, “I wish I had more time.”
Summary of Life Gets in the Way

Part-time doctoral students often felt that they did not have time to engage in relationships with their peers. Much of their experience as a doctoral student was described as “treading water” and trying to keep their heads “above water.” The experience of the part-time doctoral student is the experience of holding a full-time job (on average of 40 to 50 hours per week) outside of the university as well as balancing family with other obligations. This is where “life gets in the way” of establishing educative and nurturing mentoring relationships with others in the process of doctoral studies. This experience led to isolation from peers due to the lack of time to engage in relationships due to time commitments to career, family and other professional obligations.

Summary of Isolation

Part-time doctoral students experience isolation from their socialization through the notion of second tier doctoral student status and their lack of time to be engaged in doctoral studies. Both the perceived notion of second tier doctoral student status and the lack of time both lead to lowered self-efficacy and difficulty in negotiating scholarly identity. The notion of part-time doctoral students being second tier doctoral students leads the student to believe they are lesser of a doctoral student than other, especially full-time doctoral students. It also creates barriers to establishing beneficial mentoring relationships with other doctoral students. The lack of time part-time doctoral students have to dedicate to doctoral studies as a result of primary time commitment to a full-time career outside of doctoral studies also creates isolation from socialization. Life gets in
the way for these students because they have other commitments outside the university, which detract from establishing mentoring relationships with peers. Both the notion of second tier doctoral student status and the lack of time contribute to a sense of isolation.

**The Intersection of Collegiality and Isolation**

The part-time doctoral student experience includes an overlap of both collegiality and isolation. This is by no means to indicate that this is a dichotomy of experience but a fluid part of the experience that can sometimes be both collegial and isolating simultaneously or in some cases may seem collegial but in reality create isolation.

The overlap of collegiality and isolation is found in the negotiation of scholarly identity by part-time doctoral students. All doctoral students must develop their scholarly identity as they progress through doctoral studies. However, for part-time doctoral students a major pressure in negotiating their identity comes from the concurrent identity they hold as professionals in their full-time careers they are maintaining outside the university while enrolled in doctoral studies. Ironically, many of the participants who identify the conflict between negotiating scholarly identity and full-time work outside of the university also find significant peer mentorship from their workplace colleagues. Negotiating scholarly identity can be understood from the perspective of anticipatory socialization as well as socialization to the role of scholar. The process of socialization can be facilitated by peers and in the process of anticipatory socialization; doctoral students begin the transition to the mindset of the scholar. Indeed as the doctoral student moves forward in being socialized to the role of the scholar, peer networks can be a powerful force in this process. However isolation from peers and/or the lack of
self-efficacy as well as feelings of being second tier doctoral students conflated with a lack of time to interact with peers can stagnate the negotiation of scholarly identity. Thus, negotiating scholarly identity lies at the intersection of collegiality and isolation because part-time doctoral students find collegiality from the same source from which they may experience isolation.

**Negotiating Scholarly Identity**

Half of the participants explicitly voiced concerns about negotiating a scholarly identity as a part-time doctoral student and full-time professional. Some of this conflict in scholarly identity grows out of the second tier notion some part-time doctoral students perceive to be reality. In some cases, the lack of self-efficacy combined with lack of time to establish educative and nurturing mentoring relationships with peers where scholarly identities are explicitly explored creates tension in negotiating scholarly identity. The perception of the scholarly identity being in contrast (and thus creating tension or feelings of isolation) to the professional identity can be illustrated through statements from Matthew, Phyllis, and Jan (all K-12 teachers). I understand *this feeling of tension between developing a scholarly identity while still maintaining a teacher identity*. As I have continued to teach high school science while pursuing doctoral studies, I have *often found stark relief between my teacher identity and my emerging doctoral student identity*. In other words, concerns I had as a teacher are very different from and often in direct conflict with concerns and experiences I had as a doctoral student. In some ways, it felt as though I was leading a double life with *no connection between being teacher and being scholar* leading to a sense of isolation. Matthew said, a “challenge I guess is trying
to situate myself as a researcher when I know in my heart I care about teaching.” Phyllis, like Matthew, felt there is a conflict in these identities and was concerned that there needs to be a middle ground and relevance in research for teacher practitioners. She stated:

I am sort of feeling a pull between theory and the practicing teacher and how to convey theory to the practicing teacher and pursuing something that is relevant to a practicing teacher, because I don’t know, I just feel like if I don’t do something that is at least relevant to somebody somewhere, again, what is the point?

Jan similarly noted, “I feel that there is alienation because of my discipline of the K-12.” Her statement like those of the others illustrated her struggle to identify with the role of the scholar distinct from her previously established teacher professional identity, thus leading to an isolating effect from doctoral studies. Participants like Jan, Phyllis, and Matthew feel that peer conversations tend to minimize the importance of the teacher identity while maximizing the scholarly identity and this can create conflict in the maintenance of both identities concurrently. Later in the interview, Jan went on to discuss the commitment she had to her teaching career because she had been teaching for 13 years and considered her position as a special education teacher important both financially and philosophically.

The concern of establishing scholarly identity was even found among participants who were not K-12 teachers. Indeed, all doctoral students come to their doctoral journey with previously established identities that will be different or perceived as in conflict with the scholarly identity. The full-time doctoral student peer debriefer utilized in data analysis for this study indicated her own feelings of conflict in identity development (see
Appendix K). The struggle to find scholarly identity was especially difficult for those who strongly identified with their established profession. For example, Andrew, a professional exercise physiologist, indicated:

It is frustrating on a number of fronts because I have, what I believe to be, a pretty strong wealth of knowledge about my field. I feel like I am an excellent student, but I think that because of the situation that I am in [as a part-time doctoral student]; I don’t think that I have reached my full potential.

Other participants indicate that developing scholarly identity can also be conflicted when interacting with peers. For example, Jo Ann indicated that in conversations with peers, she feels “there are always people who are . . . further along in the program . . . I don’t consider myself by comparison a true scholar.” Jo Ann captured the notion that there is always some self-comparison among doctoral students. These comparisons with others often lead to the comparison between part-time doctoral students and full-time students further exacerbating the notion of second tier part-time doctoral students and ultimately isolation of these students. Matthew indicated the following in regards to his perception of the difference in the experiences between part-time and full-time doctoral students:

The other piece obviously is the scholarship. They [full-time doctoral students] are working on grants. Because they have to, I mean that is their job as a GA. But they are doing grant work; they are being cut in on some nice opportunities to get their name in articles.
Furthermore, participants find the struggle between what they see as examples of scholarship and the comparison they make based on their experience, especially as teachers. Eddy indicated that “at least in education, there has to be a commitment to teaching . . . If that piece isn’t there, I almost consider you a phony scholar, because you don’t necessarily have the practical experience.” His comment captures the essential conflict in negotiating scholarly identity between what he sees at the university at valued scholarship and what he sees as valued as a teacher. Linda similarly articulated her experience in developing her emerging scholarly identity and the need to keep seeking when she said:

That’s kind of another theme I think is authenticity. You know, trying to get there and you’re like, “What’s real?” We don’t know. “What’s truth?” We don’t know. Anyway, we just keep seeking.

**Anticipatory socialization.** From the outset of doctoral studies, many of the participants felt as though they were on the outside and not really a part of the University. Anticipatory socialization includes the experience doctoral students have from the outset of doctoral studies or within the first year of the process (Bess, 1978; Thornton & Nardi, 1975; Weidman et al., 2001). Many important events occur in the first year of doctoral studies. In my own doctoral student experience, *I felt very alienated at the beginning of my doctoral studies* and found support from peers to be essential in making connection to the College and University. The connections they made with others, especially the formation of peer networks in the early days of their coursework became crucial for their scholarly identity to emerge. Kelly remembered an important opportunity she had in
hearing other doctoral students’ experiences “in Residency; we have Doctorate students come in, who actually were doctoral candidates at the time and they talk about the process. Very frightening. I don’t think I was aware of what all it entailed.” Donald similarly remembered, “I think when we do start, we don’t really know what we’re getting ourselves into at all, really. I didn’t. I felt like I was going back to school as I was in my master’s.”

In many ways, interactions with peers in the early days of doctoral study create the opportunity to begin developing scholarly identity and promote collegiality. George remembered:

That first semester I’m like “Oh boy, am I sure I’m going to be able to do this?” But then after [you get] the first couple of classes under your belt and then you feel you can do it.

Similarly, Linda remembered her first class as the beginning of her identification as scholar and providing her with a missing piece in her professional life. She said:

When I took Fundamentals of Curriculum my lived experience then became tagged with what I was learning, and I knew why I was so frustrated. It was almost like therapy. It was. So, I thought, “I’m doing this.” After that class, I thought, “This is what I’m going to do, because this is just like a glove.”

For Phyllis, the beginning of her coursework provided her with opportunity to become enmeshed in what it means to be a scholar:
I was taking those classes, which I did in a year, and then . . . I think provided an excellent foundation for how you write professionally and how you look at data and collegial [peer] relationships and things like that.

**Socialization to the role of scholar.** Several of the participants, including Matthew, Jan, Penny, Amy, and Julia, felt they are not receiving appropriate socialization to the role of the scholar. Kelly, Andrew, and Doris lamented that they have no publications on their Curriculum Vitae and are concerned about this lack of experience. *These experiences do not resonate with my own doctoral student experience* where I found great support from peers and professors in developing my scholarly identity. Throughout my doctoral education, *I experienced opportunities to present at conferences as well as to write for publication*; many of these experiences *had grown out of my work with the Doctoral Student Forum*. Some participants spoke solely about writing for publication and presenting at conferences as their experience with socialization. Many of the participants, including Donald, Jennifer, Olivia, Phyllis, Jo Ann, Abby, and Joey, spoke about the work they engage in with their peer network as being the most important experience that provides them with socialization experiences (as discussed above under Collegiality including both educative and nurturing mentoring). Other participants indicated that these experiences occur in the workplace (usually in higher education) with colleagues whom they interact with every day.

Participants who believed that the conference experience or presenting at a conference is an essential socialization experience included Jan, Kim, Amy, Donald, George, Jennifer, Linda, and Elmer, especially if these presentations are conducted with
peers or peers can be observed making presentations. Jan indicated, “I have presented now, I did one last Friday.” Amy stated, “I went to the ones [conferences] that I could actually drive to. I presented at one.” Donald echoed these thoughts when he said, “It was really good and we [Donald and his doctoral student peers] did do some presentations at conferences and went to AERA with one of those papers.” George elaborated on his first conference experience:

I was fortunate in that first semester I went to that conference . . . Sitting in on presentations by both faculty and also graduate students from throughout the country helped me understand what a graduate student does and what a faculty member does; how you present a paper, how you present a poster.

Kelly, Andrew, and Doris all stated that they have not had any of their work or research published. Kelly believes that publications will not be important for her future as a scholar when she said:

I haven’t written any articles. But I don’t have to though. I kind of feel indifferent about it. I feel like maybe I should have written something by now, but whatever, kind of thing. I know being, my cohort that were in my classes, they had all written articles and done certain things. A lot of them wanted to be professors, so I am thinking that plays a role in it.

By contrast, Andrew recognized that being published will be important for his future. He had an opportunity to be involved in a study with his doctoral student peers and he stated, “I offered to run the stats for the study, you know, for just no reason other
than the experience and also because I wanted to stick my name on the study so that I could get published.”

Participants who did believe they had received appropriate socialization experiences, like Donald, Jennifer, Olivia, Phyllis, Jo Ann, Abby, and Joey, felt they have gained this experience from working within their peer network such as with small groups of their doctoral student peers or with their workplace colleagues. For example, Olivia credited her coworkers for having provided this experience:

> These folks that support group down there [branch campus], not necessarily math education, just education, this is what you need to be doing. This is publishing. This is what you need to do in terms of getting out to conferences, so they are pushing me in different ways.

Similarly, Abby credited her workplace colleague and her doctoral student peers at the university:

> I’ve also had socialization experiences I think from my colleagues at [the workplace]. Because, we’re a small school and there are some other Ph.D. students. There are also faculty that knows I’m in a doctoral program that I’ve talked to about experiences in that. So I get, I get the socialization at both places [the university and work].

Generally, participants indicated that they seek help and advice towards their doctoral studies from many different places and that the peer network as exemplified by collaborative efforts with fellow doctoral students or workplace colleagues is essential in their socialization to identify with the role of the scholar.
Summary of Negotiating Scholarly Identity

Negotiating scholarly identity includes the need to develop a new identity as a scholar distinct from previously held professional identity (e.g., the teacher, administrator, or other professional identity). This process includes a struggle for finding a new scholarly identity while simultaneously maintaining the previously held professional identity. Peers can play into this negotiation of scholarly identity when comparisons are made between self and other doctoral students, during anticipatory socialization and as they are socialized to the role of scholar. Some students find themselves to be lacking in developing their scholarly identity compared to their peers and what they see as valued as scholarship at the university. Peers can also play a positive role in negotiating scholarly identity as discussed above in collegiality. Therefore, negotiating scholarly identity lies at the intersection between collegiality and isolation.

Summary of the Intersection of Collegiality and Isolation

Collegiality and isolation in the socialization of part-time doctoral intersect at negotiating scholarly identity. Self-efficacy can be improved through collegiality with peers as they experience educative and nurturing mentoring or dyadic co-mentoring. However, self-efficacy can be impoverished when part-time doctoral students fail to make connections with peers or experience unsupportive peer interactions and feel isolated from doctoral studies. Negotiating scholarly identity is influenced by self-efficacy at the intersection of collegiality and isolation when part-time doctoral students either feel efficacious collegiality through mentorship with peers or isolation from peers thus
stymieing the negotiation of their scholarly identity. In the process of negotiating
scholarly identity these variables can take on either collegial or isolating affects upon the
part-time doctoral student thus they lie at the intersection of collegiality and isolation.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is the perceived measure of one’s ability to be successful in specific
situations (Bandura, 1977, 1993, 1994); for doctoral students this includes the ability to be
successful in doctoral studies. Therefore all doctoral students experience varying degrees
of positive and negative self-efficacy at different points throughout doctoral studies. As
discussed above under Collegiality including educative mentoring, nurturing mentoring,
and dyadic co-mentoring, these relationships can serve important efficacious functions.
Positive mentoring relationships create improved self-efficacy, which leads to improved
negotiation of scholarly identity and therefore socialization to the role of scholar.
However, some experiences with peers can also lead to impoverished self-efficacy and
isolation from the socialization experience. Lack of self-efficacy can be a powerful source
of negative experience and can create self-doubt for the doctoral student, this may grow
out the notion of the second tier part-time doctoral student status or the lack of time to be
dedicated solely to doctoral studies. All of this may lead to isolation of the part-time
doctoral student from socialization to the role of scholar. Although self-efficacy is not
generally discussed together with mentoring relationships, the self-efficacy of an
individual can go far to promote or discourage these relationships.

As described above under Collegiality, peer mentorship can go far to improve the
self-efficacy of the doctoral student. Both educative and nurturing mentoring experiences
for part-time doctoral students foster an efficacious outlook toward doctoral studies. Students fortunate enough to forge dyadic co-mentoring relationships with a peer can enjoy both educative and nurturing mentoring within that association and benefit from improved self-efficacy. However, these relationships can be rare or fleeting. Most of the spontaneous peer mentoring described by the participants is fleeting and ephemeral, generally lasting only a semester.

Twenty of the 21 participants felt that they have experienced concern as to whether or not they will succeed in doctoral studies or a lack of self-efficacy. In my own experience as a part-time doctoral student, I often felt as though I would not make it to completion of the degree, especially when engaged in comprehensive exams and dissertation work. One major concern I have had throughout my doctoral studies is whether I would have the stamina to persist to degree in the limited time I do have to complete my work. When combining the lack of interaction with peers, the unsupportive nature of some experiences with doctoral student peers with lack of time and lack of self-efficacy, this can lead to distinct feelings of isolation for the part-time doctoral student. Oftentimes these feelings manifest themselves as a result of alienation from others or the ability to persevere in the process of doctoral studies. Some participants struggled with identifying when they need to ask for help and other participants lacked connections with other students and felt very alone in the process of doctoral studies. Amy mentioned early in the first interview about her general impression of the alienation she has experienced in her doctoral studies when she said, “It’s not even so much hoops. It’s the course work, the papers, and then now in the dissertation phase. There’s no one
to help me to pull myself out.” Some of these participants, like Amy, do not experience peer support and struggle as a result. For other participants, identifying when to ask for help can be one of the keys to stave off feelings of isolation. George mentioned several times in both the first and second interviews his struggles with knowing when to ask others for help. He described one incident when he was able to turn to his peers in an effort to understand:

I hate to keep coming back to this—like admitting that I don’t understand a concept. Like, we were reading *Emile* last night. Book 5 is about Sophie. Sophie is Emile’s mate. And I’m like, “I don’t know what it was like, Rousseau [laugh].” But, you know, we tried to go back to look at actually what he’s trying to say, not the time that he was in. I was having a hard time with that because we live now; we don’t have an experience of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. So I said, “Can you guys help me out? I don’t understand.”

Kim also found great help from peers, which helped to reduce her feelings of isolation and improve her self-efficacy. She mentioned an instance similar to George’s experience where she found that peers can actually help with discerning what is and is not important to focus on:

Keeping up with the reading I think, is a tough thing and then you start to talk to the peers and everyone is going, well, I think this book is probably more important so you kind of help each other figure out if you got to let some reading go, let this one go. So that has been helpful, getting back to the peer thing.
Everyone is finding it hard, especially those in other classes. I know I let a lot of Residency readings go.

Similarly Andrew stated:

I wrote [on the visual representation] “Can I do it? Will I do it?” Do I have the perseverance to follow through on it? You know can I do it physically, because, you know physically, mentally, I am exhausted all the time.

Phyllis articulated this when she said:

But it is precarious you know, it is definitely precarious staying in balance without having volatility, so that is probably because of the whole fact of going away, leaving my child, working with a big group of people [peers], having everything in order and maybe that is why I am thinking chaos and volatility.

Other participants recognize that a lack of self-efficacy is part of the process and is natural for all doctoral students to experience these feelings. Even the full-time doctoral student peer debriefer mentioned feelings of inadequacy that lead to a lack of self-efficacy (see Appendix K). Jan stated, “I just think this is a rigorous process that everybody probably feels horribly disillusioned with at some point or another.” However, as Andrew noted, “I wonder if the cost outweighs the benefits” indicating how much a part of the experience lacking self-efficacy comprises the experience of the doctoral student.

Another way in which the lack of self-efficacy is manifested is in the perception of the undermining and/or unsupportive nature of peer interactions. As a doctoral student I never experienced situations like these personally but I can understand how instances like these could occur and how the lack of self-efficacy could be manifested as such in
the classroom. Indeed, in some cases, *I may have been the peer who made others experience a lack of self-efficacy due to my own confident and self-assured behavior* in the classroom. A barrier to establishing relationships with doctoral student peers was related in several different forms by Doris, George, and Elmer. Their experiences can be described as either incident when they felt a lack of self-efficacy themselves or observed behavior in their classmates indicating their peers’ lack of self-efficacy. These were moments when the student felt out of touch with his or her peers and were concerned that he or she did not understand the interpersonal dynamics of the situations. In the experience of Doris and Elmer, these situations made them reconsider their own contribution to the class and changed their attitudes toward contributing to class. Doris’ negative experience came in an on-line course environment whereas Elmer’s and George’s negative experiences occurred in the traditional classroom setting. The context of the interactions (traditional or on-line classroom) does not seem to matter; what does matter is the isolating effect on the doctoral student. Doris related her experience when she explained this situation:

> And in that specific instance, there was like this underlying competition that I was sensing between that student and the rest of the students when it came to the professor. It was like this student had to show that he had a direct contact with that professor and could domineer in the course . . . It got to be that way, where I would just read and not even want to participate. And I found myself posting on threads of people that he picked on [laugh] to try and support them.
George felt he did not understand the dynamics between his classmates and was apprehensive to respond. He described his experience when he remembered:

So, then one day I get a slap on my arm when we’re in class. The Mongolian student taps me and passes me a note. I thought she had a problem with the [language] maybe didn’t understand what was going on . . . I open up this note. “I don’t like this girl because she thinks she knows everything” [laughs]. When George realized the problem was in conflict management, he was taken aback and began to reconsider statements he would make in the classroom and how they would be perceived, in this way diminishing his own self-efficacy. In a different way but similar in the undermining nature of the interaction, Elmer had a negative experience that made him, like George, reconsider his input during class. He related his experience:

And then one day I didn’t realize that this is happening, but I was talking to one of my fellow students before her presentation, and I said something like, “are you ready for this? Are you good to go?” . . . And she said, “Well don’t ask any questions! . . . you intimidate us . . . You should see our faces sometimes when you start talking to Dr. Brown.” And I have to say that this just really caught me off-guard. I wouldn’t say it hurt or anything like that. But it definitely, the next time I opened my mouth in that room it was a different . . . I felt different about it.

Elmer remembered later in the interview that this experience caused him to think differently about comments he made in class and how his doctoral student peers would interpret this, especially if his contributions in the class would lead his peers to
experience a lack of self-efficacy. He believed it reduced his input in the class and he even noted “it did change; I think the way that I responded to some things in class.”

A final component in the experience of the lack of self-efficacy for the part-time doctoral student is in the lack of an orientation to doctoral studies. Twelve of the participants discussed challenges related to the university and procedures that did not adequately meet their needs. The most serious challenge was the lack of an orientation; this created a situation where part-time doctoral students did not connect with peers. Some of the Schools within the College offer courses that act as orientation for new doctoral students (e.g., Residency I in School 2); other Schools did not (at the time of the study) offer any orientation courses or similar opportunities for the new part-time doctoral student. In my own experience as a beginning part-time doctoral student, I remember being very confused about procedures germane to the college and university and really wish I would have had an orientation to my program of study or at least to the college. This lack of orientation caused me to work very hard in the early days of my program to find support I needed to conduct my business at the university, find materials needed in the library and connect with appropriate staff and faculty when I had questions. This all further exacerbates the sense of isolation by creating an unnecessary lack of self-efficacy for the new part-time doctoral student. Jo Ann mentioned, “There was never an orientation to the program or orientation to the college or anything like that.” Abby echoed this concern when she stated:

I don’t feel like I got an orientation to the program. I feel like I was admitted and thrown into a class . . . and I really wish I would’ve had an orientation and maybe
some advice. Looking back on it, I wish I had taken one of the certificate programs and now it’s too late.

Abby continued to feel isolated as she experienced problems with admissions, registration, and understanding the culture of the university:

I was just like absolutely clueless if I was going to get in, and then, when I did find out that I was accepted in the program it was the first day of classes and I just had to show up for a class, so I wasn’t registered, had no parking pass, I knew nothing. I was completely inundated, and I remember I keep thinking I am not new to this college thing, why can I not figure this out? But this is a first experience being a part-time student. I had the hardest time getting registered. I had the hardest time paying my bill. So it was just very, very stressful. And, I remember crying every time I would have to register for the first couple of semesters. It would just be horrid.

In reflecting on the whole process, Donald remembered some very isolating moments at the outset of his doctoral studies. He was very frustrated with the process and his lack of understanding of how to proceed due to a lack of guidance or orientation from the outset:

It was not all easy. I didn’t really want it to be easy but there were times, there were moments that I was so angry at the whole process. I just thought you’ve got to be kidding. Just to get this degree, you’ve got to be kidding.
Summary of Self-Efficacy

Positive educative and nurturing mentoring experiences with peers can lead to improved self-efficacy for doctoral students; however, part-time doctoral students as all doctoral students often lack self-efficacy. This can be manifested in feeling as though they will not persevere to degree or in negative interactions with peers who may also be lacking self-efficacy. The lack of an orientation to doctoral studies may further exacerbate these feelings because connections are not made with others from the outset of doctoral studies. Part-time doctoral students who feel isolated from peers and do not make appropriate connections with peers, faculty and other college or university staff ultimately may not develop productive, scholarly relationships with others who will facilitate their socialization and may experience a lack of self-efficacy.

Composite Description of Collegiality and Isolation

Part-time doctoral students experience peer mentorship or collegiality through educative mentoring, nurturing mentoring, and dyadic co-mentoring. These relationships with doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues, and personal friends provide important experiences that facilitate an understanding of academic content of doctoral studies or psychological and emotional support. Part-time doctoral students may experience educative and nurturing mentoring with peers throughout doctoral studies as they become involved in peer networks or one-on-one with certain peers. Part-time doctoral students experience nurturing mentoring from their peers when they feel supported psychologically and emotionally. Most educative and nurturing mentoring relationships tend to be ephemeral generally lasting only for a semester. A more intense form of peer
mentorship is observed in dyadic co-mentoring relationships where two peers form a long-term association where they provide both educative and nurturing mentoring functions for one another over time. Dyadic co-mentoring relationships are more akin to traditional peer mentoring relationships. All collegial relationships tend to improve the self-efficacy of the part-time doctoral student as they negotiate their scholarly identity.

Part-time doctoral students experience isolation when they identify themselves as second tier doctoral students and when they recognize the lack of time they have to engage themselves in their doctoral studies. The notion of second tier doctoral students comes from comparison with what is expected from doctoral students as they work to complete their degree. Much of this thinking comes from belief that part-time doctoral students are missing out on experiences that other doctoral students, especially full-time doctoral students, experience. This can lead to a lack of self-efficacy and undermines the negotiation of scholarly identity because these students do not seem to develop substantive relationships with their peers due to lack of time or interactions with others on campus.

Part-time doctoral students experience an intersection of collegiality and isolation in negotiating their scholarly identity. These experiences can take on either a collegial or an isolating nature and therefore lie at the intersection between collegiality and isolation. All doctoral students experience a strong sense or an impoverished sense of self-efficacy at differing points in their doctoral studies. For part-time doctoral students, this lack of self-efficacy can be manifested in concern as to whether they will persist to complete the degree. However, more germane to the part-time doctoral student experience is in
interactions with seemingly unsupportive peers who may also likely suffer from a lack of self-efficacy. Part-time doctoral students also experience a lack of self-efficacy if they do not experience an orientation to doctoral studies and are left uncertain as to the workings of the college and university due to a lack of connection with other students, faculty and staff from the outset of doctoral studies. Part-time doctoral students are in the unique position of creating a new scholarly identity for themselves while concurrently maintaining a previously established professional identity. This process can be facilitated by interactions with peers but also stymied when the part-time student compares themselves with other doctoral students and find themselves lacking in their scholarly development.

**Description of Interrelationships Between Themes and Subthemes**

Figure 5 has been created to visualize the connections or relationships between the themes and subthemes generated from the part-time doctoral student participants’ experience with peer mentorship. Figure 5 represents an important contribution to the literature on doctoral student socialization because it provides a model of the experience of the part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship. Figure 5 also provides a visual representation of the data analysis presented in this chapter.

I have chosen the Venn style diagram for Figure 5 because within the entire experience of peer mentorship towards the socialization of the part-time doctoral student (the larger circle); the major components of this experience are collegiality and isolation (the two intersecting circles). The circle on the left side of the diagram is collegiality, which includes educative mentoring, nurturing mentoring and dyadic co-mentoring.
relationships. These mentorship relationships go far to improve self-efficacy for the part-time doctoral students as they negotiate their scholarly identity, thus providing collegial support. However, dyadic co-mentoring sits closer to the center of the collegiality circle because these relationships provide greater source of mentorship for part-time doctoral students including both educative and nurturing mentoring components. Educative and nurturing mentoring are positioned further to the left side of the circle because these are essential components of peer mentorship and these experiences are often experienced by part-time doctoral students from relationships with multiple individuals from within their social network. Often times these sources of mentoring do not occur within the context of a single long-term relationship with another individual but arise spontaneously and often times ephemerally from relationships with varying individuals, including other doctoral students, workplace colleagues and personal friends.

The circle on the right side of Figure 5 includes isolation as a component of the experience part-time doctoral students has with peer mentorship. This includes both the notion that part-time doctoral students are second tier doctoral students and the issue that life gets in the way. Both of these issues stem from the lack of time for developing meaningful relationships the part-time doctoral student experiences while engaged in doctoral studies. I have placed the notion of the second tier doctoral student closer to the center because this perception can create the greatest feelings of isolation for a part-time doctoral student and may be perpetuated among other part-time doctoral students leading to greater feelings of second tier doctoral student status. In the case of feeling like a second tier doctoral student, part-time doctoral students may perceive they are not
receiving the level of scholarly development as other, especially full-time doctoral students. In many ways, this may be the result of lack of time to engage with others on campus and the inability to develop substantive relationships while engaged in doctoral studies. Life gets in the way is situated further from the center of the circle because this issue is a concern for part-time doctoral students and creates barriers to socialization but is less likely to be as powerful a force in creating feelings of isolation when compared to the second tier doctoral student notion.

At the intersection of the Venn diagram in Figure 5, I include negotiating scholarly identity because these experiences often take on characteristics that are both collegial and isolating for the part-time doctoral student. Sometimes these experiences can be both collegial and isolating at the same time. These experiences may result from poor interactions or lack of interactions with peers who can provide socialization for the part-time doctoral student. These experiences may be the result of the part-time doctoral students’ dedication to their full-time profession or the perception that other doctoral students receive privilege they do not experience. As part-time doctoral students negotiate their scholarly identity, they may find conflict between their concurrently held professional identity and may struggle in comparing themselves to other doctoral students and find themselves lacking in negotiating their scholarly development.

Self-efficacy is placed below the two intersecting circles of collegiality and isolation because feelings of positive self-efficacy and also feelings of impoverished self-efficacy can greatly influence the part-time doctoral student’s ability to experience socialization through peer mentorship. Part-time doctoral students find increased
self-efficacy when engaged with their peers in mentoring relationships; these relationships create socialization experiences through educative, nurturing and dyadic co-mentoring experiences. Part-time doctoral students find themselves with lowered self-efficacy when they consider themselves second tier doctoral students and also when they feel life gets in the way. Also, as part-time doctoral students negotiate their scholarly identity, they may feel either efficacious collegiality through mentorship with peers or isolation from peers thus stymieing the negotiation of their scholarly identity. Self-efficacy in itself does not lead to the socialization of the part-time doctoral student but the experiences with peers can alter an individual’s perspective toward socialization experiences. Therefore positive or negative self-efficacy can play an important role in the socialization experience a part-time doctoral student has through peer mentorship.

Summary

The participants experienced a great deal of collegiality through peers within the construct educative mentoring, nurturing mentoring and dyadic co-mentoring relationships. In many cases these experiences improve the part-time doctoral students’ self-efficacy as they negotiate their scholarly identity. Participants experienced isolation from others as a result of feelings of being second tier doctoral students and lack of time to immerse themselves in doctoral study. In some ways, the themes of collegiality and isolation overlap as part-time doctoral students experience both positive and negative self-efficacy and the negotiation of scholarly identity. Figure 5 illustrates the relationships and the relative values between the components in the part-time doctoral
student experience within the context of collegiality and isolation of the socialization of part-time doctoral students.

This chapter described the data from interviews with the 21 part-time doctoral student participants. The themes of collegiality and isolation were presented with direct quotes and experiences related by the participants. These themes allow the reader to understand the importance of peer mentorship in the socialization of the part-time doctoral student. Many of the part-time doctoral students in this study felt they were disconnected from the university, and through educative mentoring, nurturing mentoring and dyadic co-mentoring relationships they found support for their doctoral studies. Composite descriptions presented in this chapter captured each of these themes and represented the overall experience participants had with peer mentorship and demonstrated the essence of the part-time doctoral student experience with socialization through peer mentorship.

In Chapter 5, I present the research results relevant to the literature on doctoral student socialization, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral students; this is compared and contrasted to the findings from this study. I also present limitations of this study as well as recommendations for part-time doctoral students and their faculty. Finally, I present implications for practice as developed from this research in terms of part-time doctoral student socialization. This includes both proactive implications as well as experiential implications for facilitating part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship. I conclude by presenting suggestions for future research on this topic.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The findings of this phenomenological study provide an important examination of the socialization processes for the part-time doctoral student. An understanding of part-time doctoral students’ experience is missing in the current doctoral student socialization literature; this study attempts to fill this gap. Part-time doctoral students often experience challenge in the time to degree and in becoming socialized to the academy. Therefore, this study identifies peer mentorship experiences of part-time doctoral students thus adding an important conceptual understanding to the literature of doctoral student socialization. As presented in the previous chapter, a common essential peer mentorship experience for part-time doctoral students in this study includes two major themes: collegiality and isolation.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretation of the data through the lens of current scholarly literature and also to provide implications for practice of socialization by peer mentorship for part-time doctoral students. This chapter presents interpretations and discussion on doctoral student socialization, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral student experience to articulate the contributions of this research study. In this chapter, I also examine the limitations of this study, present implications for practice of part-time doctoral student socialization, provide recommendations for doctoral students as well as provide recommendations for faculty of part-time doctoral students and provides suggestions for future research.
Interpretations and Discussion

Spontaneous Educative and Nurturing Mentoring

Findings from this study are consistent with the literature on doctoral socialization, peer mentorship, and part-time doctoral students. However, findings have emerged that contribute to the literature based on the experiences of the participants. In both the Weidman et al. (2001) and Austin (2002) frameworks of doctoral student socialization, recognition of persons outside of the university setting are identified as important agents of socialization. In the present study, the importance of persons from outside the university like workplace colleagues and personal friends were also identified as important support resources (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Baker & Pifer, 2011; Gardner & Gopaul, 2011; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Sweitzer, 2009) and provided important spontaneous educative and nurturing peer mentorship for the part-time doctoral student (see Figure 5). Doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues, and personal friends serve as important “developers” who provide “developmental assistance” as part of the social network of the part-time doctoral student (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 269). For these individuals, there may be greater potential for persistence to completion of the Ph.D. because they were receiving socialization to the academy both at the university and also in the workplace (Ehrenberg & Kuh, 2009; Lovitts, 2001). The dyadic co-mentoring relationships described between Jennifer and Olivia as well as Amy and Linda demonstrate the importance educative and nurturing mentoring as a part of a seamless relationship within the academy. Workplace colleagues provided educative and nurturing mentoring for Abby, Jennifer, Jo Ann, Julia, and Olivia primarily because their
professional positions are located in higher education outside of the university in which they are pursuing doctoral studies. Personal friends provided primarily nurturing mentoring for Amy, Donald, Elmer, Jo Ann, and Phyllis because they are a firmly established part of the social network (Higgins & Kram, 2001) of the individual doctoral student.

However, unlike the doctoral socialization literature, these same support resources (i.e., doctoral student peers) can also create challenges and detract from the socialization experience. Literature exists suggesting supportive persons within the social network of an individual may at other times induce stress or create interference or conflict (Richardson, Barbour, & Bubenzer, 1991, 1995; Shinn, Lehmann, & Wong, 1984). This stress or interference is described in this study as the second tier doctoral student subtheme of isolation as well as through the lack of self-efficacy resulting from negative peer group influence. Doctoral students are not immune from these pressures and these experiences can create isolating experiences as they attempt to negotiate scholarly identity (see Figure 5). The isolation created by negative peer group influence and the notion that part-time doctoral students are second tier students is an especially salient theme of this research.

The contribution this study makes to the literature is in identifying the dynamic experience of the part-time doctoral student and the recognition of the many persons who play a part in their socialization. In many ways, the developmental social network of the part-time doctoral student looks a lot like the developmental network of a full-time doctoral student with a “narrow range of interactions” that must be made up for outside
of the university community (Solem, Hopwood, & Schlemper, 2011, p. 9). These educative and nurturing peer mentoring relationships with workplace colleagues and personal friends take on the same function as relationships with doctoral student peers albeit in environments separate from the university.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is described as one’s belief in their personal success in a given situation (Bandura, 1977, 1993, 1994). Doctoral students may experience improved self-efficacy through educative or nurturing peer mentorship relationships or an impoverished sense of self-efficacy as a result of isolation from other doctoral students or lack of understanding procedures germane to doctoral studies. In this research, part-time doctoral students connected with doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues or personal friends are encouraged to “approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided” (Bandura, 1994, p. 71). This is made possible through educative and nurturing mentoring as well as dyadic co-mentoring experiences. Part-time doctoral students who experience a lowered sense of self-efficacy may find it “difficult to achieve much while fighting self-doubt” (Bandura, 1993, p. 118). The notions of second tier status of part-time doctoral students and negative peer interactions, as well as the lack of time these students have to be engaged in doctoral studies can create an impoverished sense of self-efficacy. All doctoral students at different points throughout doctoral studies experience the entire spectrum of self-efficacy. Bandura (1993) suggested that a person who has high self-efficacy may perform exceptionally
whereas the same person with low self-efficacy may perform un成功fully at certain tasks.

Low self-efficacy can create barriers to success in doctoral studies as documented in the undermining and/or unsupportive nature of some peer interactions during doctoral studies. Furthermore, part-time doctoral students can feel isolated as a result of the notion of second tier doctoral student status and the lack of time they have to dedicate to their academic pursuit. These feelings of isolation can be exacerbated when part-time doctoral students do not connect to the university from the outset of doctoral studies (e.g., lack of an orientation) and continue to lack educative and nurturing mentoring experiences with their peers throughout their experience. Therefore, as suggested by Bandura (1993), these part-time doctoral students may perform un成功fully due to low self-efficacy.

High self-efficacy can be obtained at least in some form from positive educative and nurturing mentoring experiences with peers. As documented in discussion of collegiality, doctoral students who experience supportive peers (either other doctoral students, colleagues or personal friends) tend to have a more positive outlook towards their doctoral studies. Part-time students experiencing positive collegial interactions with peers report an improved sense of self-efficacy in those situations. These students are more likely to successfully negotiate their scholarly identity.

**Negotiating Scholarly Identity**

The negotiation of doctoral student identity (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Sweitzer, 2009) and the overlap with the notion of social networks theory (Higgins & Kram, 2001)
is significant. Participants indicated a definite connection between the negotiation of a scholarly identity within the social networks in which they live and work; all doctoral students come to doctoral study with previously established identities, which must be negotiated. There was the greatest void for participants like Doris, Matthew, and Jan who felt a more explicit development of learning communities by doctoral students and the college or university would be most appropriate. Recent literature suggests that part-time doctoral students feel they must rely upon themselves more heavily than others “to make progress and influence their own work” (Solem et al., 2011, p. 9). Part-time students crave formal socialization experiences through peer mentorship and feel they have missed opportunities for ready contact with their doctoral student peers. Scholarly identity is tagged for participants with the need to develop scholarly social networks: The need to be in conversation with their doctoral student peers is oftentimes lacking or not developed due to a lack of time or isolation from the college or university. For example, Matthew, George, Donald, Eddy, Linda, Abby, Julie, and Andrew all admit that mentorship from doctoral student peers is minimal so they must rely on persons from outside of the university (e.g., workplace colleagues and personal friends) to provide them with support for their doctoral studies. These part-time doctoral students experience more spontaneous educative and nurturing peer mentorship for their doctoral studies from within their social network that is already established outside the university.

The tension that exists between a previously existing professional identity and developing doctoral student identity is also an important finding of this study that contributes to the scholarly literature. The most notable concern for part-time students
who concurrently hold full-time careers outside of doctoral studies is in the maintenance of the professional identity they have already developed while simultaneously negotiating an emerging scholarly identity that differs from this identity. All doctoral students struggle with negotiating a scholarly identity, including part- and full-time students (see Appendix K for a full-time doctoral student account of negotiating scholarly identity). However, the maintenance of the professional identity concurrently while in the process of attempting to negotiate a new scholarly identity can create considerable tension for these students. This differs from the position of the full-time doctoral student who generally maintains assistantship duties within the university while pursuing doctoral studies thus lessening the dichotomy between responsibilities.

A common issue among the participants was the struggle to identify with the researcher persona or the role of the scholar (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; Rasanen & Korpiaho, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009) while still teaching, especially in the K-12 environment (Becker & Carper, 1956; Colbeck, 2008). Negotiation of scholarly identity can be assisted during anticipatory socialization when doctoral students find mentorship from their peers and during socialization to the role of scholar when engaged in academic work with peers within the social network. For the K-12 teacher participants, the role of scholar and teacher seemed to be in direct conflict, this is especially difficult because these participants primarily view themselves first as teachers and secondarily as doctoral students/emerging scholars. These feelings of conflict may also come from commiserating discussions (much like the notion of second tier doctoral student discussions, as described below) with other part-time doctoral students who also maintain
full-time teaching responsibilities. Negotiating scholarly identity, especially for K-12 teacher/doctoral student participants, is a salient finding of this research especially when considering the role peers play in these explorations of emerging scholarly identity. The experiences of Matthew, Phyllis, and Jan exemplify this issue and point directly to the literature on developing doctoral student identity (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Sweitzer, 2009).

Experiences with peers can play a role in developing scholarly identity but can also create a scenario in which these part-time doctoral students believe themselves to be second tier to other doctoral students. Not only is this an important finding of this research but this may also provide substance for future research efforts on doctoral student socialization. This process can be viewed as either a positive or negative but most importantly, “educating doctoral students to find the synergistic connections between their multiple identities is a way of ‘reprofessionalizing’ academic work, one student at a time” (Colbeck, 2008, p. 14). Part-time doctoral students who find a common ground between the intellectual demands of doctoral studies and their professional life can benefit and bridge the gap between the two worlds of the practitioner and scholar. This common ground could possibly be found in spontaneous educative and nurturing mentorship from both doctoral student peers and also outside the university in the form of colleagues in the workplace and personal friends.

The first year of doctoral study has been coined the “anticipatory stage,” the time when the student becomes aware of the appropriate behaviors, attitudes, and cognitive expectations in the role of the graduate or professional student (Bess, 1978; Gardner,
This seminal year of doctoral studies has also been referred to as Stage II or the Stage of Explorations (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Grover, 2007) and is an important time when critical connections are made. Participants spoke of the importance of the connections they made with others in the early days of their coursework became crucial for their scholarly identity to emerge. Socialization to the role of the scholar (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Austin, 2002; Gardner & Mendoza, 2010) spoken of most frequently in terms of attending conferences with peers or writing for publication and/or the lack of these important opportunities. Nearly all the participants spoke about the socialization they are experiencing as doctoral students towards their identification to the role of the scholar (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; Rasanen & Korpiaho, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009). Socialization is recognized as activities that provide an introduction to what it means to be a scholar (e.g., writing the Curriculum Vitae, presenting at conferences and writing for publication). This process differs from what students experience as anticipatory socialization (Bess, 1978; Thornton & Nardi, 1975; Weidman et al., 2001) or the experiences they have from the outset of doctoral studies like experience with orientation or other seminal activities within the first stage or year of doctoral studies (Ali & Kohun, 2007). Consistent with the literature, participants in the study identified connections made with the community of doctoral students at the university as an important part of their scholarly development (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Baird, 1992; Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Bragg, 1976; Grover, 2007; Solem et al., 2011; Sweitzer, 2009; Weidman et al., 2001). In many ways, the interactions with peers in the
early days of doctoral study sets up the opportunity to begin developing scholarly identity.

**Chaotic Peer Mentorship**

Participants indicated they relied on peers at all levels of the doctoral student journey. The dyadic co-mentoring experiences of Olivia and Jennifer as well as Amy and Linda provided the most apparent examples of peer mentorship relationships and are most in line with the working definition of mentorship guiding this research (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Aston & Molassiotis, 2003; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Kram, 1988). These specific examples of dyadic co-mentorship provide excellent examples that contribute to both peer mentorship literature as well as the doctoral student socialization literature. These spontaneous educative and nurturing peer mentorship relationships developed over time and are not fully recognized until the participants reach the final stages of doctoral study; both pairs of women were near the end of their doctoral studies. Furthermore, peer mentorship relationships typically have been viewed as most effective when the “mentor” is further along in the student experience than the “mentee” (Aston & Molassiotis, 2003; Noonan et al., 2007; O'Neal & Karlin, 2004; Silva et al., 2006). In the present study, at least one pair of effectively co-mentoring students (e.g., Olivia and Jennifer) became “dissertation buddies” and benefited from this peer mentorship experience. In the literature, the idea of the cohort as a support structure that allows large group mentorship opportunity is documented (Mullen, 2003, 2006), but the one-on-one peer mentorship as described in the relationship between Olivia and Jennifer is missing from the literature, this study contributes to this understanding.
There are isolated anecdotal examples in the scholarly literature of studies of doctoral student peer mentorship within a small group (Devenish et al., 2009; Hadjioannou et al., 2007), and this can be effective as can be seen from the examples of Tina and Phyllis in the present study. Both Tina and Phyllis described the benefits they have experienced from the more formal peer mentorship within small, professor-led groups of doctoral students. These experiences are the result of learning communities with the express purpose of socialization to the role of doctoral student that are craved by all doctoral students. This mentorship is much like social networks as described in the literature (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Overall, the experiences of the participants in this study reflect the notion that “students are encouraged to see a variety of individuals as resources that may provide them various forms of support as they work to become thoughtful scholars” (Stephenson & Christensen, 2007, p. 73). The notion that doctoral students should recognize a variety of persons within the social network (Higgins & Kram, 2001) as mentors is significant and has been identified as “chaotic mentoring” (Iverson, 2005). This idea of chaotic mentoring grows out of the notion of “chaotic interactions” in organizations and the empowerment individuals and groups experience through this discourse (Stacey, 1992). The concept of chaotic and irregular mentoring as described within discussion of educative and nurturing mentoring seems to be the most common way that participants experience mentorship. Therefore, the definition of effective mentoring relationships should include a larger range of interactions for part-time doctoral students and they should be encouraged to embrace these multiple peer relationships that provide educative and nurturing guidance. The
assumption that effective peer mentoring should be hierarchal where one student is further along in doctoral studies should be reevaluated. In that most of the educative and nurturing peer mentoring experienced by participants in this study were with students at the same stage of doctoral studies or with workplace colleagues or personal friends not even enrolled in doctoral studies is significant. Effective peer mentoring can be lateral among networks of individuals and in many cases is identified by the part-time doctoral student as emerging from their choice of persons whom they recognize as mentors (Iverson, 2005). Much like the cohort model (Mullen, 2003, 2006) as successfully used in practice, effective mentorship for part-time doctoral students can be collaborative, spontaneous and most importantly open to choice of the individual student.

Goodness of Fit

The notion of the goodness of fit was developed as a model by Thomas and Chess (1980) and may be applied nicely to the part-time doctoral student experience through peer mentorship. In the model, the idea that a person experiences goodness of fit when their “own capacities, motivations, and style of behaving” are in line with the demands of their environment (Thomas & Chess, 1980, p. 90). A person may experience “consonance” when they are a good fit for their environment; the same person may experience “dissonances” when they are a poor fit for their environment. In the case of poorness of fit, an individual may experience “distorted development and maladaptive functioning” as a result of the conflict between self and environment (Thomas & Chess, 1980, p. 90). The notion of goodness of fit has been applied in K-12 settings (Feagans, Merriwether, & Haldane, 1991), to the professoriate (Pounder, 2009), and to leadership in
nonprofit organizations (Dym & Hutson, 2005). The findings from the participants in this study suggest that this same notion of goodness of fit could be applied to mentorship for part-time doctoral students.

Part-time doctoral students in this study could be described as having experienced goodness of fit to their doctoral student program when they reported feelings of collegiality through nurturing and educative mentoring, and dyadic co-mentoring with peers. On the other hand, part-time doctoral students experienced poorness of fit when they felt like second tier doctoral students as a component of their isolation from other doctoral students as well as their overall experience in doctoral studies. The notion of goodness or poorness of fit to doctoral studies deserves further exploration. Even though none of the participants in this study explicitly referred to their experiences as good fit or poor fit to the doctoral student environment, this notion can surely be deduced from the experiences of these participants. Do some doctoral students make a poor fit to their program of study or to the environment of the classroom or to the peers they encounter while engaged in doctoral studies? This is a notion that can only be inferred from this study but would be worth further investigation. If a part-time doctoral student is a poor fit to the environment of doctoral studies (especially including peers) this may create a scenario in which the student continuously feels isolated from the experience and “maladaptive functioning” (Thomas & Chess, 1980, p. 90) may occur. This may also be concluded from the second tier notion identified by the participants. The benefit to investigating goodness of fit for part-time doctoral students, especially in terms of peer mentorship would be to recognize when a student is conflicted by self against
environment and make some efforts to intervene and help move the student to a point of consonance rather than dissonance. In some way, this may improve the persistence of some of these students or may guide other students to engage in more productive endeavors even if this means in some cases they leave doctoral studies or pursue a more appropriate plan of study. Furthermore, by encouraging part-time doctoral students to seek out appropriate mentors for the support they need to succeed in doctoral studies this may allow them to experience goodness of fit.

**Isolation and Second Tier Doctoral Students**

One of the most important contributions this study contributes to the literature is the identification of the notion that part-time doctoral students feel they are second tier doctoral students. The accounts related by participants in this study indicate that part-time doctoral students believe that other doctoral students, especially full-time doctoral students experience privilege as doctoral students. This issue is conflated by the sense that part-time doctoral students lack time or often feel “life gets in the way” of their doctoral studies and especially in the development of their scholarly identity. Even though part-time doctoral students have been identified as inferior to their full-time counterparts for years (Conant, 1963; Glazer, 1986) from the experiences of these participants, this notion still exists. There is only one recent piece of literature that hints at the concern some doctoral students feel as second tier students (Acker & Haque, 2012); however, it does not provide example of how this can happen for part-time doctoral students. The literature does suggest in other social networks that productive and counterproductive interactions can originate from the same reference group
(Richardson et al., 1991, 1995; Shinn et al., 1984). The experiences of the participants in this study serve as examples enabling researchers and faculty of doctoral students to better understand how doctoral students unintentionally or purposely undermine one another and even though some experiences with peers seem collegial (e.g., when commiserating with other peers on the second tier status of part-time doctoral students), they may also result in counterproductive scholarly development. This work could be used in an effort to increase the positive benefits of peer mentorship and the development of positive social networks (Higgins & Kram, 2001) and decrease negative interactions among doctoral students.

Even though nearly half of the participants spoke about feelings of being second tier doctoral students, the other half of the participants did not mention these feelings in their interviews. The reason for these feelings stem from the sense of isolation experienced by the part-time doctoral student and these feelings are translated by some as feeling second tier to other, especially full-time doctoral students: Those doctoral students who feel most isolated are also likely to feel second tier. Furthermore, most of the part-time doctoral students who indicated at least some feelings of being second tier were enrolled in Schools 1 and 2. It seems that these students are being socialized by others in those schools (perhaps other part-time doctoral students?) that they are second tier to their full-time counterparts. Discussions of the deficiencies and isolation of the part-time doctoral student may be part of the normal conversations in these Schools and therefore part of the identification these students make for themselves as second tier. Part-time doctoral students who focus on being second tier to other doctoral students are
most likely to feel isolated and are thus socialized to this “second tier” status. However, the discussion of feelings of second tier status of the part-time doctoral student seem to be less common in Schools 3 and 4 and therefore these participants were less likely to report themselves as feeling second tier. It seems that conversation of second tier part-time doctoral students has become part of the culture of the School within the College, these conversations will be more common and thus these students will identify themselves as such. Much like the literature on socialization of doctoral students (Austin, 2002; Baird, 1992; Bragg, 1976; Weidman et al., 2001), the role of peers and the influence they have on the developing scholarly identification and personal socialization are powerful.

Lack of self-efficacy combined with the notion of second tier status is a struggle for the part-time doctoral student. All doctoral students also experience low self-efficacy at some point or points throughout doctoral studies (see Appendix K for a full-time doctoral student’s identification of lack of self-efficacy). The scholarly literature also contains detailed descriptions of the self-doubt experienced by doctoral students as they struggle to complete their degree (Austin, 2002; Nyquist et al., 1999; Watts, 2008). These research participants indicate a lack of self-efficacy resulting from not knowing when to ask for help, not having a strong social network to draw upon (Higgins & Kram, 2001), and viewing themselves as second tier doctoral students. Oftentimes these feelings manifest themselves as a result of alienation from others or experiencing feelings of the inability to persevere in the process of doctoral studies; these participants indicated that facilitating the development of learning communities to foster socialization experiences
would be very helpful in improving their self-efficacy, similar to suggestions made by other scholars (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Austin, 2002; Gardner & Gopaul, 2011). Maintaining balance (Gardner, 2007; Gardner & Gopaul, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009) for the part-time doctoral student is also important to reduce self-doubt. Being mindful of the precarious act of avoiding “volatility” as described by Phyllis and being aware of the “rigorous” nature of the process of obtaining the Ph.D., as described by Jan, reduces self-doubt. These participants felt they must continually remind themselves they can succeed in doctoral studies as long as they maintain balance and avoid the pitfalls of self-doubt. Developing learning communities that may be chaotic or irregular peer mentorship socialization experiences holds promise in assisting all doctoral students and reducing self-doubt and notions of second tier doctoral student status so they can persist to completion of doctoral studies.

Many of the participants believed learning communities could be more effectively utilized by the university and could reduce the lack of self-efficacy and isolation for doctoral students. Much of this discussion related to being mindful of the need to facilitate the creation of learning communities (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; Rasanen & Korpiaho, 2011). The scholarly literature refers to this type of a learning community as “a collegial and affirmative alternative to normative approaches” (Rasanen & Korpiaho, 2011, p. 28). Learning communities can also enable positive formation of doctoral student identity (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Baker & Pifer, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009) as these students negotiate their scholarly identity. All the participants mentioned experiences they have had with learning communities or small
groups of peers who they identified as a community of learners essential to their doctoral student experience. Many of these participants believed learning communities could be more effectively utilized by the university and could reduce feelings of self-doubt and isolation of the part-time doctoral student. Learning communities as described by these participants would include groups of peers that meet together and discuss issues related to doctoral studies or provide support in the doctoral journey. Julia indicated, “The study groups and the relationships that I form make me feel more included within an education community.” Similarly, Jo Ann indicated, “I think relationships with other people are essential to broaden your own being . . . I enjoy the opportunity to meet people and to talk to people and find out what we can do for each other.” These learning communities would provide a connection for these doctoral students to the university and encourage collaboration that could ultimately improve the self-efficacy of the doctoral student. Phyllis summarized the need for learning communities when she stated, “we were all kind-of learning together, this group of learners that came together.”

Part-time doctoral students are now more common in colleges of education than are full-time doctoral students (Choy & Cataldi, 2006). Understanding the part-time doctoral student experience is missing from the literature (Erickson et al., 2004; Gardner & Gopaul, 2011; Pittman, 1997). This study captures the essence of the experience of the part-time doctoral student, and much like the existing literature indicates, these students miss out on ready contact with doctoral student peers, faculty, and the simple experience of being present on campus for the many activities available to support students (Erickson et al., 2004; Neumann & Rodwell, 2009; Syverson, 1999; Watts, 2008). This
was especially true for some of the participants like Kelly, Julia, Amy, Doris, Olivia, and Jan as described in the lack of communication they had with their advisors, committees, as well as doctoral student peers. Furthermore, the feelings of isolation from peers and faculty further exacerbate the solitary nature of the part-time doctoral student experience. The participants in this study validated the literature (Pittman, 1997) when they spoke about the “privileges” enjoyed by full-time doctoral students, and one participant even perceives part-time doctoral students as “second tier people.”

In earlier scholarly writing in my own doctoral journey, my colleagues and I have indicated that part-time doctoral students feel they are disconnected from the university culture and feel isolated from the experience, resulting in a second tier status for part-time doctoral students (Bircher, O'Brien, Pech, & Bintz, 2010). This discussion of second tier doctoral students needs to be interrupted. All doctoral students need to feel a part of the academy and feel as though they developing their scholarly identities and are not second tier students. Even though full-time students do not perceive they receive privilege, other than their mere presence on campus to afford greater interaction with other students, staff and faculty (see Appendix K). Many part-time doctoral students seek spontaneous mentorship from outside the university social network and rely on workplace colleagues and/or personal friends to fulfill the need for mentorship. Indeed, the culture of the academy as experienced by some participants still seems to view full-time doctoral study as superior even when the reality is that most education doctoral students today pursue doctoral study as a part-time venture to career or family obligations.
A New Conceptualization of Peer Mentoring for Part-Time Doctoral Students

The part-time doctoral students in this study identified mentorship for their doctoral studies from their relationships with other doctoral students, workplace colleagues and personal friends. These mentorship experiences result in nurturing, educating or dyadic co-mentoring functions. In many cases, these experiences originate from different people at different times. Part-time doctoral students must rely upon their existing social network (Higgins & Kram, 2001) to find mentorship for their doctoral studies. In many cases, these mentorship experiences originate from persons beyond the academy; part-time doctoral students should embrace all the possible mentorship relationships they can identify.

Furthermore, part-time doctoral students should ask for the help from within their social network to find the mentorship that will best serve their needs (Rockquemore, 2011). A fellow doctoral student peer mentor that is more advanced at the beginning of doctoral studies may be very helpful but may not meet the needs of that student throughout their program of study. Dyadic co-mentoring experiences provide powerful opportunities to connect with one other doctoral student; however, from the experiences of the participants in this study, this is a rare experience among part-time doctoral students. Part-time doctoral students should consider their entire social network and the complex web of interactions (Rockquemore, 2011) they experience as potential for peer mentorship. This process will involve constant reconsideration of what is needed at the time and the ability to locate an appropriate mentor. Especially salient for part-time doctoral students is the importance of asking for the mentorship needed at the time and
identifying what they need and where they can get it (Rockquemore, 2011). More responsibility for appropriate mentorship should come from the mentee and not complete dependence on the mentor to provide these experiences. Chaotic mentorship (Iverson, 2005) and the web of relationships in which a part-time doctoral student find themselves should be harnessed for the fullness of mentorship opportunities. For example, some individuals in the social network may provide excellent emotional or nurturing support (e.g., personal friends) whereas educative mentoring will likely be best provided by fellow doctoral students within or outside of the individual’s program of study. These excellent “mentors” will likely vary from time to time in the part-time doctoral student experience and may even vary depending on the needs required for mentorship and the function needed by the individual; therefore part-time doctoral students should recognize multiple individuals as mentors and seek these mentors out from within the existing social network. The point of considering a new conceptualization for peer mentorship for part-time doctoral students is the recognition that hierarchal and traditional modes of peer mentoring may not be appropriate for these students and may not meet the multiple needs of this group of students considering the multiple responsibilities they may hold concurrently with their doctoral studies.

**Limitations**

This research has several limitations. First, the sample of participants only represents doctoral students from one College. Participants were recruited with a message sent via the College’s Doctoral Student Forum listserv, and all participants that responded to the call for participants were accepted for the study. There was no attempt
to actively pursue doctoral students by personal invitation or by face-to-face contact. An attempt was made to recruit participants that represented the demographics of the College; however, the actual participants did not fully represent the student population of the College. For example, only one participant responded from School 4, and nearly half of the participants in this study represented School 2 where in reality; they are only 26% of the College demographic.

A second limitation to this study may be the cautious and tentative responses that participants gave in the interviews. In some cases, the participants were somewhat uncomfortable with creating the visual representation and were afraid of the interpretations I would make of their “artwork.” Although most participants appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their doctoral student experience by completing the visual representation, some still expressed a certain level of anxiety in producing this piece. Some participants asked specifically who would see the transcripts produced from this research and were hesitant to relate some of the more negative aspects of their experience as a part-time doctoral student. Even though they were assured complete confidentiality, there were still cases where participants were uncomfortable relating incidents with peers and faculty that could be considered dissentient.

A third limitation of this study is the timeframe in which the interviews were conducted. All students were interviewed within a four-month time period. Some participants noted that their feelings and impressions represented the stage at which they were in doctoral studies, which is consistent with the literature (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Baird, 1992; Grover, 2007; Weidman et al., 2001). In some cases, participants stated that
their impressions and understanding of the process of doctoral education had changed in recent days. Had I interviewed them earlier in their progress of pursuing the Ph.D., their responses may have been much different. I am sure that if the participants were interviewed again at a future date, their responses would also vary somewhat as they progress to another stage of doctoral study. The statements of these participants represented a snapshot of their experience. A longitudinal study of part-time doctoral student experiences would be helpful to understand how impressions and experiences change over the course of their experience.

A final limitation of this study is the interviewing, recording, reading, coding, and analysis of the data were completed by myself as a part-time doctoral student. In the final stage of data analysis, I employed two peer debriefers: one a full-time doctoral student, the other a part-time doctoral student (see Appendices J and K). In conducting this debriefing, I developed a heightened awareness of my biases and assumptions as a part-time doctoral student. For example, I had always assumed full-time students enjoy informal socializing after class that I did not personally experience. Furthermore, it had been impressed upon me by both my doctoral student peers as well as by some faculty that part-time doctoral students are “second tier” students. Also, even though I knew that most full-time doctoral students also experienced a lack of self-efficacy, I believed in some way, it was to a lesser degree as to how part-time doctoral students feel. In retrospect, I believe these perceptions are likely not based in reality. However, perception is reality for these part-time doctoral students. Where do these notions come from and how do they get perpetuated? It seems that the full-time/part-time dichotomy
may indeed be simply perception (elevated to the point of legend) with little or no substantiation in reality. Therefore, I submit that these analyses and presentation of this data are purely my construction, albeit the best construction I could make from my data and personal experience (see Appendix L for a more detailed description of this process of reflexivity).

**Implications for Practice in Part-Time Doctoral Student Socialization**

Based on the experiences of the participants in this study, implications for practice of part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship have been developed. In reality these implications apply to *all* doctoral students, both full-time and part-time students. The experience of the part-time doctoral student is the unique situation where considerations have to be made of how peer mentorship relationships can either facilitate feelings of collegiality or isolation within their experience. Figures 6 and 7 have been created to conceptualize the relationships part-time doctoral students experience with peer mentorship; these implications for practice provide contributions to doctoral student socialization literature as well as to the peer mentorship literature. Figure 6 provides proactive implications for suggesting activities and experiences that would encourage peer mentorship for part-time doctoral students. Figure 7 provides experiential implications for suggesting how changes can be made in the experience of part-time doctoral students that would encourage collegiality among doctoral students. These relationships can either encourage socialization to the academy or these relationships can derail and create barriers to socialization for the part-time doctoral
Figure 6. Proactive implications of part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship. This figure represents proactive implications illustrating activities and events facilitating peer mentorship towards socialization of part-time doctoral students. These activities are able to be promoted and controlled by the university, college, department (program of study), or individual faculty of part-time doctoral students as well as individual students.
Figure 7. Experiential implications of part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship. Experiential implications illustrating the experiences part-time doctoral students have with collegiality versus isolation.

These implications are conceptualized as a concept map that illustrates the positive and negative relationships and how these socialize the doctoral student.

Proactive Implications

The proactive implications illustrated in Figure 6 identify a linear sequence of events that would encourage Collegiality among part-time doctoral students and reduce feelings of isolation these students feel in the process of doctoral studies. Again, these series of events may be most helpful for all doctoral students and facilitate movement towards increased positive socialization to the role as scholar. This implication starts from day one of doctoral studies as is suggested by the orientation that is encouraged for part-time doctoral students (as well as all doctoral students) as they begin doctoral
studies. Participants in this study felt like they missed out on opportunities or misunderstood the procedures germane to the college or university without experiencing an orientation at the beginning of their doctoral studies. The inclusion of the orientation for these students would facilitate understanding of the college and university and allow students to recognize what resources are available to them, including faculty, staff, as well as other students. It will also provide beginning doctoral students with time to interact with doctoral students both within and outside of their plan of study and make contacts that can be valuable later in finding support in navigating doctoral studies. In many ways, an orientation can provide the new doctoral student with the awareness of the need to develop spontaneous and often time chaotic peer mentoring relationships with others throughout the course of doctoral studies. It has been noted that orientations planned by the university or college can go far to provide direction to new doctoral students (Ali & Kohun, 2007).

Of course, an orientation to doctoral studies is not the only suggestion for facilitating improvement in socialization; many participants in this study indicated that completing class projects with peers outside of the regular class meeting time was important to their socialization. The results of this study also indicate interactions with workplace colleagues and friends provide important mentorship relationships for part-time doctoral students. Faculty should encourage doctoral students to maximize the use of their social network (Higgins & Kram, 2001) and engage themselves in explicit conversations about negotiating their scholarly identity while maintaining their concurrent professional identity. Developing relationships that will transcend the typical
college semester provide a major socializing force to the academy; this may include experiences like working with small cohorts of peers, small professor-led research or discussion groups, and developing mentorship relationships with personal friends, workplace colleagues or doctoral student peers. Theoretically, these experiences can lead to more meaningful co-mentoring or dyadic relationships for part-time doctoral students.

Finally, part-time doctoral students should be encouraged by faculty as well as by one another to maximize feelings of self-efficacy and to be explicit in minimizing negative scenarios that are counterproductive to scholarly socialization. In developing positive relationships with other doctoral students, workplace colleagues and personal friends, doctoral students will find support for the often arduous process of doctoral studies. Part-time doctoral students should also encourage one another to avoid consider themselves as second tier doctoral students. In the process of admissions and throughout doctoral studies, all doctoral students are held accountable to rigorous standards of performance and intellectual development. Part-time doctoral students should not view themselves as second tier doctoral students; this notion should be eliminated from the perception of these students and replaced with a more positive mindset of the emerging scholar.

**Experiential Implications**

The Experiential implications illustrated in Figure 7 presents a flow chart of events that would encourage collegiality among part-time doctoral students and reduce feelings of isolation these students feel in the process of doctoral studies. Both the positive and negative sides of the experience are presented in this model because many
doctoral students, as has been illustrated through the experiences of the participants in this study, experience both sides of this in their part-time doctoral student experience (see Figure 5).

The left hand side of the model includes the basic mentorship part-time doctoral students need to experience a sense of collegiality. These experiences include being involved in little cohorts with their fellow doctoral students, being a part of a small, professor-led group of doctoral students, and co-mentoring with other doctoral students at similar phases in doctoral studies. Doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues, or personal friends can serve effectively as co-mentors for the part-time doctoral student.

Small, professor-led groups of doctoral students can most effectively offer mentorship to part-time doctoral students and may include discussion groups related to topics of interest for doctoral students (e.g., writing the Curriculum Vitae, conducting research, writing the dissertation proposal, preparing proposals and presentations for professional conferences, etc.). Research projects conducted by small groups of doctoral students under the guidance of a professor can also offer important socialization experiences for the part-time doctoral student that may not be experienced in any other way in the doctoral student experience.

The right hand side of the model includes the experience of isolation that many part-time doctoral students feel as they move through their doctoral studies. As has been illustrated from the participants’ experiences in this study, negative peer group influence, feelings of being a second tier doctoral student, and feeling that life gets in the way of doctoral studies creates an environment in which the doctoral student will experience a
lack of self-efficacy. Time constraints for part-time doctoral students have also been documented in the scholarly literature (Gardner & Gopaul, 2011; Smith, 2000; Watts, 2008). A major contribution of the study is to add an understanding of the notion of the second tier doctoral student experience. In many ways, this conversation needs to be interrupted and it needs to be communicated that part time doctoral students are not second tier. Lack of self-efficacy as a result of the inherent challenges of doctoral study is powerful and may stymie the progress of the part-time doctoral student. All attempts to utilize their social network (Higgins & Kram, 2001) and to feel a part of the collegial environment of the university should be encouraged for all part-time doctoral students even though they may feel the pressure of time constraints. However, caution should be used in that part-time doctoral students do not create situations where a notion like the second tier status dominates interactions with peers. Part-time doctoral students need to capitalize on similarities between themselves and their peers and not allow these interactions to lead to counterproductive exercises.

**Recommendations for Part-Time Doctoral Students**

The experiences of these part-time doctoral students indicate that these students must take a more active role in their own socialization. Many of the participants, like Amy, Doris, Jan, Matthew, and Donald, believed that their lack of socialization was the result of inappropriate faculty guidance or lack of ready contact with their peers. In some cases, these students may miss out on appropriate socialization experiences because they did not engage themselves in campus activities or interact with their peers and faculty as much as they could have. Students should make an effort to reach out to their peers and
faculty for help as they journey through doctoral studies. Some of the most beneficial experiences for doctoral students include working with other students on research activities or class projects, like the experiences indicated by Tina, Phyllis, Julia, Donald, Jennifer, Olivia, Linda, Eddy, and Jo Ann; many of these activities took place outside of the normal venue of the classroom. Students should make an effort to develop relationships with their peers and create their own learning communities. Part-time doctoral students as well as faculty should make efforts to encourage other doctoral students to engage in these activities. However, caution should be made to avoid destructive and counterproductive notions (i.e., second tier doctoral student) while engaged in these relationships. Small, professor-led group activities like those experienced by Tina and Phyllis or in mentorship relationships like those documented in dyadic co-mentoring relationships like those described including Amy and Linda or Olivia and Jennifer are most productive.

Part-time doctoral students are most in need of opportunities to present at professional conferences, write for publication, or engage in grant work activities as their scholarly identity emerges. Indeed, these activities may likely not occur spontaneously for the part-time doctoral student. Part-time students need to take the initiative and create opportunities through collaborative work with faculty or other doctoral students to engage in these activities. Much of this work will be by request of the student and not by invite of faculty. Part-time students must be aggressive if they are to have these experiences and must pursue opportunities to engage in these activities without explicit faculty invitation and/or request. Part-time students need to actively seek out
opportunities to involve themselves in the work of others and be prepared to do much of this work without monetary compensation but take the experience as payment in itself.

**Recommendations for Faculty of Part-Time Doctoral Students**

Faculty of part-time doctoral students have the unique opportunity to either encourage socialization for these students or to maintain the status quo of the traditional belief that part-time doctoral studies are inferior to full-time studies (Pittman, 1997). Faculty should encourage doctoral students to work together and to consider other students as potential scholarly collaborators and discourage negative peer influence. Faculty should also make attempts to interrupt discussion of the notion of the second tier doctoral student and reduce development of negative and counterproductive commiseration discussions among doctoral students.

The participants in this study found that small, professor-led peer groups working towards specific goals including research, socialization topics, or class projects can be particularly beneficial for part-time doctoral students. The experience Tina had with her “little cohort” and Dr. Jones illustrates the value of a professor-led group that discusses research, writing curriculum vitae, and preparing for conferences and dissertation defenses outside of a normal classroom setting. Tina even related that this opportunity was so helpful that she and many of her peers would make time for the meetings with this group even though they received no course credit or independent study for the effort. Phyllis’ experiences with her small professor-led research group gave her a “scaffolded initiation into what it means to be a researcher, and to work with other people who have the same interests as you do.” These experiences are rare for most part-time doctoral
students and being provided with these experiences will allow them to be better prepared to write the dissertation (a very lonely experience for part-time doctoral students) and engage in future research that will set them on the path to a productive scholarly career. Doris even noted that, “you know, have that network. That network means a lot. And that’s where . . . That’s something that I would say I think any Ph.D. program needs to facilitate.”

Faculty who establish peer networks or learning communities with explicit goals for the part-time doctoral students facilitate professional development and allow for scholarly growth that will enable these students to complete the dissertation successfully. These peer networks or learning communities need to be encouraged to persist beyond the typical college semester. Some of the most effective peer networks exist for several semesters to years of the doctoral student experience. These participants experienced mentorship though their peer network over the course of substantial time whereby they can learn to create research protocol, conduct pertinent literature reviews, draw conclusions from data, and finally write results for publication and presentation at conferences.

Faculty who invite students to be part of their research efforts should be prepared to separate tasks into doable chunks (e.g., review literature, write IRB, collect, analyze, organize, and present data). Students need to be encouraged to take the initiative and faculty needs to be prepared to enable students to do this work incrementally. In this process, the student will be able to take ownership of the work and develop scholarly
habits of the mind that will socialize them to future productive participation in the academy.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This research has several possible applications for future inquiry. First, the project could be expanded to include part-time doctoral students in different colleges. Next, it may be helpful to conduct a longitudinal inquiry of part-time doctoral students to determine how time and movement through the stages (e.g., moving from coursework to dissertation) of the doctoral student experience impacts their personal socialization. Also, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of a formal peer mentorship program on the formative socialization of beginning doctoral students.

Expanding this study to include part-time doctoral students (and perhaps even full-time students together) from different colleges would allow a researcher to add to or deepen understanding based on the theoretical model developed in this study. It would be interesting to investigate how different dynamics depending on the geographical location of the college and varying demographics of participants (i.e., race, gender) influences socialization. The part-time doctoral student experience is not germane to the college included in this study when clearly, part-time doctoral students are becoming more common than full-time education doctoral students (Choy & Cataldi, 2006). It would be valuable to ascertain how students interact with one another (i.e., mentorship experiences) in different settings and to explore how these experiences influence part-time doctoral student socialization.
An interesting extension of this study would be to conduct a longitudinal study of the same participants in the future. Similar questions could be posed to the participants and exploration of the changes in the doctoral student experience as they move from coursework to dissertation. Do all participants experience similar transitions from doctoral student to doctoral candidate? How do peer mentorship relationships develop over time? Do these participants have opportunity to develop cohorts with other doctoral students who have similar interests? These are all questions that could be pursued in an attempt to more effectively understand the part-time doctoral student experience.

A most interesting study would be to institute a formal peer mentorship program for beginning doctoral students whereby they are assigned an experienced doctoral student to be their mentor in the first semester of coursework. To this end, I created a formal Peer Mentorship Program that I administered through the Kent State University EHHS Doctoral Student Forum in fall semester 2010 and spring semester 2011. This program continued in fall semester 2011 under the direction of a new coordinator. The fall 2010 group of mentors and mentees included 19 experienced doctoral student mentors interacting with 39 new doctoral students (mentees). The spring 2011 group of mentors and mentees included 6 experienced doctoral student mentors interacting with 7 new doctoral students (mentees). The participants involved in this program will be interviewed in the future to determine the benefits and successes of their experiences as well as to investigate how these relationships can be strengthened or facilitated. As I build the groundwork for this future study, I invited five of the mentor/mentee participants from the fall 2010 group to engage in journaling about their experiences with
the peer mentorship relationship and provided them with three prompts over the course of the semester for their writing consideration. The experiences of this small sample will inform the development of effective interview questions for the entire sample of both fall 2010 and spring 2011 mentors and mentees. I hope that the data generated from these studies will enable me to develop guidelines for doctoral student peer mentorship programs. Although this Peer Mentorship Program is a more hierarchal and formal model of mentorship, lessons can be learned from these relationships that can be applied to informal or chaotic mentoring situations.

An important direction this research could take is to develop a theoretical model for part-time doctoral student socialization. A theoretical model could be developed by expanding this study in ways mentioned in the previous paragraphs. A researcher could gain greater insight into the experience of the part-time doctoral student by examining the research questions with greater numbers of part-time doctoral students in a wide variety of college and university settings. Questions to be pursued could include: How do part-time doctoral students navigate doctoral study? What support do doctoral student peers, workplace colleagues and personal friends provide to the part-time doctoral student as they negotiate their scholarly identity? How do part-time doctoral students surmount the numerous barriers they experience in the process of doctoral study? How can the college or university facilitate meaningful interactions among doctoral students to improve socialization for all doctoral students, both full-time and part-time? How do part-time doctoral students experience doctoral study as “second tier” students? How do part-time doctoral students experience goodness or poorness of fit to their doctoral
student experience? Can a new conceptualization of peer mentorship be developed from
the experiences of part-time doctoral students? All of these questions can be pursued in
an effort to provide a more robust understanding of socialization of doctoral students in
an effort to be more explicit in the development of the scholarly identity of these
students.

Summary

This final chapter has positioned the results of this study alongside the existing
literature including explicit points of contribution this study makes to doctoral student
socialization literature, examined the limitations of this study, presented implications for
practice of part-time doctoral student socialization, provided recommendations for
part-time doctoral students, provided recommendations for faculty, and provided
suggestions for future research. Based on the data analysis, I have revealed two major
themes in the experience of the part-time doctoral student: collegiality and isolation.

The development of implications for practice in this chapter provides a starting
place for understanding part-time doctoral student socialization through peer mentorship.
The implications are based on the experiences of participants in one college and more
research is needed to provide a more robust understanding of the variables affecting
part-time doctoral student socialization. The nuances of peer mentorship for doctoral
students and the benefits thereof require more research. I hope that in further studies I
will be able to articulate the results of peer mentorship in more detail and develop a
theoretical model for colleges as to how these relationships between individuals can
provide essential socialization experiences for part-time doctoral students.
APPENDIX A

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
Appendix A

Kent State University Institutional Review Board Approval

February 25, 2010
Lisa Bincher
Curriculum and Instruction

Re: # 10-017: “Part-time Education Doctoral Student Socialization through Peer Mentorship”

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your protocol through the expedited (Level II) review process. Approval is effective for a twelve-month period:

February 12, 2010 through February 11, 2011.

Federal regulations and Kent State University IRB policy require that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email as a courtesy. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials. Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP): FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 330-672-2704 or Pwashko@kent.edu.

Sincerely,
Paulette Washko
Manager, Research Compliance, Communications and Initiatives
cc: Dr. William Brintz

Division of Research and Sponsored Programs
Office of Research Safety and Compliance
1330 672-2754 Fax: 330-672-2658
P.O. Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242-0190
APPENDIX B

INITIAL EMAIL CONTACT WITH POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS
Appendix B

Initial Email Contact With Potential Participants

Dear doctoral student,

I am inviting you today to be a part of my dissertation research. My research question is: “How do part-time doctoral students experience socialization through peer mentorship?” I am hoping that you will consider being a part of my research if you are a part-time doctoral student. The criteria that I have established for participants in this research are as follows:

Must be a part-time doctoral student [in the College at the large university in Northeast Ohio] who is registered at the time of the study.

Please contact me via email at lbircher@kent.edu or by phone at 330-482-0889 if you would like to be considered as a research participant in the study. I look forward to being in conversation with you!

Lisa Bircher, doctoral candidate in EHHS, Kent State University
APPENDIX C

CONSENT LETTER
Appendix C

Consent Letter

Spring Semester 2010

My name is Lisa S. Bircher and I am a doctoral candidate at Kent State University. I am studying how part-time doctoral students and candidates in the College of Education, Health and Human Services (EHHS) experience socialization to the life of a scholar through peer mentorship. I would like for you to take part in this study. If you decide to be a part of this study, I would like to interview you and audiotape the conversations we have. I would like to use the tapes for transcription for this study, for my dissertation as well as presentation at professional conferences. All interviews for this study will be conducted during Spring semester 2010.

There will be two interviews conducted at your convenience at an on-campus location that you choose. The first interview will last approximately ninety minutes. The second interview will last approximately sixty minutes. You can be assured that these interviews will be completely confidential. The comments you make and anything you say will not have your name attached to it.

During the first interview, I will ask you to create a visual representation of your experience in your doctoral studies. I will use the following prompt to encourage you to create a visual representation:

Take a few moments to think about your personal journey as a doctoral student, on your way towards completing your Ph.D. You may want to capture this visually or with words, whichever is helpful for you.”

I will then ask you to describe your doctoral experiences, challenges you’ve encountered and supports you have used.

During the second interview, I will be asking you to review the transcript of the first interview. I will also ask you to discuss any further impressions and reflections you have on your doctoral experience.
While this will be the focus of the two interviews, I will welcome discussing other issues that you believe have been an important part of your socialization as a doctoral student through peer mentorship.

I would also like to be in conversation with you via email between and after the interviews to identify issues related to your experiences with peer mentorship in your doctoral journey. This will allow me to affirm that my interpretations of your experiences are accurate and reasonable.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. If you take part, you may stop at any time.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me, Lisa Bircher at 330-482-0889 or my advisor, Dr. William Bintz at 330-672-0658. This project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University's rules for research, please call Dr. John West, Vice President of Research, Division of Research and Graduate Studies (Tel. 330-672-2704).

You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Lisa S. Bircher, Kent State University doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction

CONSENT STATEMENT:

I agree to take part in this project. I know that I have the right to stop the interview at any time.

_________________________________________  __________________________
Signature                                               Date
APPENDIX D

AUDIOTAPE CONSENT FORM
Appendix D

Audiotape Consent Form

I agree to audiotaping of this interview at Kent State University
during Spring Semester 2010.

_________________________________________ (print your name)

_________________________________________ (signature)

_________________________________________ Date

I have been told that I have the right to hear the tapes before they are used. I have decided that I:

______ want to hear the tape  _______ do not want to hear the tape

Sign now below if you do not want to hear the tape. If you want to hear the tape, you will be asked to sign after hearing the tape.

Lisa S. Bircher and other researchers approved by Kent State University may use the tapes for the following:
* dissertation or other written publication
* presentation at professional meetings

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Signature  Date

Address:
APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to gather important information about you. Please complete all questions. All information will remain confidential. We will explore your answers to these questions in more depth during the first interview.

1. Name:_________________________________________________________

2. Gender:_____________________

3. Age:______________

4. Education:  __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. School and Department in the College:______________________________________________

6. Current Occupation:_________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

7. Number of hours per week worked in occupation:______________________________

8. Marital Status:___________________________________________________________

9. Children (names and ages):_______________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

10. Racial/Ethnic Identity:___________________________________________________

11. Year in Doctoral Program:_______________________________________________

12. Phase of program (coursework of dissertation):______________________________

13. Graduate student status (full or part-time):________________________________

14. Estimated graduation date:______________________________________________
APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF RESEARCHER JOURNAL
Appendix F

Sample of Researcher Journal

March 8, 2010

Jan (1pm on 3/8/10 at the library in a study room):

Jan was really keen to talk to me. She is British (from Wales) and has had educational experiences in England (undergrad) and in America (masters and doctorate). She married an American and thus is here. From my initial impression, without listening to the tapes and transcribing, she seemed to have a sense of being discriminated against in her doctoral experience. Interesting, I wonder if some of the discrimination may be the result of her being from another country? It does make me wonder about her “outsider” status and how this impacts how she is treated. On one hand she looks very much like any other American (white and Anglo appearing) but on the other hand when she starts speaking, you know she is different and maybe this “difference” leads to her sense of discrimination. I know when I encounter people who are different like her it does make me reconsider how I am speaking and become more sensitive to the diversity of our life experiences. She feels that there is a definite sense of professorial favoritism played toward some students and against others. She never referred to this as a racial issue but more of a personal issue. She seemed to find the most mentorship from her advisor. She has had a really rough go of it with her committee who seem to be very unsupportive from what she told me today.

Jan spoke very little about positive experiences with her peers. She mentions having pleasant interactions in the classroom and threads of emails, but does not seem to think that this was a defining part of her experience. It is very interesting because she mentions the impact that peers have had on her life that she still stays in contact with from her undergrad in England. (I wonder if this could be the result of her going back to her roots and to her place of comfort? Perhaps this is a result of her sense of discrimination during her doctoral studies?) Her undergrad is more than 25 years ago. Her sense of the unfairness of how she was treated by some professors, and especially her committee members (but not her advisor) has made the doctoral experience very tumultuous. Her visual representation is a very critical piece of documentation that supports my thinking on this. She really seems to have had a tough go of it. I actually thought at one point in the interview: I am glad I am not you!

Linda (3pm on 3/8/10 in WH room 411)

I think it is ironic that my interviews in WH will be held in room 411! Linda is so positive about her doctoral student experience. I think part of it for her is the fact that her personality is so mellow and she just blends in with people very easily. Her visual representation of a beautiful sunny day stunned me. Especially after having seen Jan’s the hour before this. How amazing that there can be two different perspectives so radically different in the same college?

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However, Jan is in School 1 and Linda is in School 2. Perhaps a difference in the program can explain this? I will need to talk to others about this . . .

Linda did not point to her peers as being very helpful in her experience. Actually, she mentioned how early on in her coursework, she felt like she was in a very competitive environment that was somewhat unhelpful. Not really stifling but definitely uncomfortable for her. She mentions coming in with a cohort (not official, but just a group of students that started the program in a similar time frame.) I was also interested to find that she will most likely not stay in contact with any of her peers (except maybe Amy) in her future scholarly life.

I was most excited to hear about Linda’s positive view of her doctoral experiences. She seems to harness the knowledge gained in her classes to her greatest advantage. However, her peers have not been a guiding force in this experience.

Question for follow-up: How could your peers have facilitated a positive experience in your doctoral journey?

Kim (7pm on 3/8/10)

I get a sense from Kim that she has been really well socialized to doctoral studies prior to formally entering the program at Kent. She is super-involved in professional practices like the OCTELA conference and taking classes for professional development. I feel kinda sorry for her because she has to work another year to get her 30 years of teaching experience. She is so ready to be a full-time doctoral student! She is also very able, just based on this conversation; she is a person who will be an excellent scholar. Now I know why Bill told me that I should “keep her close to me.” Although, maybe he knew that she is an excellent candidate for this study and exemplifies what is ideal in a doctoral student. She really seems to get the collaborative work that this type of scholarly activity requires.

One surprise from this interview (and the interviews I had with Linda and Jan) that I found is the necessity for strong family support. I know the literature points to the need for familial support, but this became very clear to me in this interview is the essential need for it. Kim spoke of her interaction with her daughter about GLBT issues. Not only this, but her husband is very supportive and emotionally encouraging her to engage in doctoral study. Hmmm . . . I wonder how often this will become a part of the conversations I will have with these students?

So there are some of the preliminary thoughts I have from today’s interviews. I have 2 more interviews scheduled this week. I am excited to see what the others have to say.

This is a different time for me. I am really enjoying these discussions and this total immersion in the research. This includes both the inference study and this dissertation work. I could not have even imagined how this would a year ago at this time. I really am starting to feel like a doctoral candidate. I am becoming.
April 8, 2010
Last day of first interviews!

OK, here is what we have from the last several days:

Tina  April 6 in rm 411 WH
Tina briefed me more on her small cohort of doc students led by Dr. Jones. I am impressed with this work and Tina finds it crucial to her success. Her lack of exercise has been bothering her and she feels that she is excusing this effort . . . whether this is important for this study, I do not know.

She talked to me about the letter writing to the department, college and the Dean about her professor that does “horrific teaching” in the classroom. She seems to have spearheaded an effort to make this known to the powers that be and to try to make a difference in this situation and to address it so that the problem can be “fixed.”

She considers her sustained contact with her cohort of doc students as a “10” on the importance value of this interaction. She talked about her meeting that she will have with Dr. Jones and the cohort tomorrow and she talked about the data that they will be analyzing in this meeting.

Elmer  April 7 in rm 411 WH
Elmer told me more about his experience with students in his class that he is presently attending. He was frustrated in class a few weeks ago when he showed up with his assignment (not to be graded) and found his classmates talking about how they did not do the work. He was angered by this lack of effort on their part and how this is so pathetic for a doctoral level course. He is also frustrated with the “same people bringing up the same things week after week” in an anecdotal fashion.

Elmer talked about his “buddy in C & I” that he spoke of in the first interview. This friend, Andy has been really critical for his success. He has known this friend for some time before coming to the Ph.D. program.

Dr. Jones  April 7 in his office
I talked to Dr. Jones in his office and was excited to hear about the reasons why he is working with doc students in “the little cohort” that Tina told me about. Here is what he said:

- one hour course that extends the Residency seminar
- worked on vitas
- organization, analyzing and writing up data
- mock dissertation proposal defense where students provide input

Why he is doing it:

- create community in educ psych program of School 1
- create a program that is strong and attracts students to the program because it has a strong research emphasis from the beginning of the program
comes out of his doc student experience and the research seminar that he was a part of at his institution

- His goal: provide the experience to create “good researcher scientists” in the educ psych program
- this does not just include his own advisees but any students in the program

Andrew in Gym Annex April 8 at 3pm

I get a sense from Andrew that his doctoral journey is very frustrating and actually this is the first thing he told me. He is working two jobs, is married with two young daughters at home. He seems to have a supportive work environment (at the hospital) where he can engage in research if he can get it to work according to the constraints of the research bureau at the hospital where he is an exercise physiologist as well as the IRB at Kent. He seems very certain of his ability but is concerned about whether he will be able to complete the Ph.D.

I don’t get a sense that there is a lot support from other students at Kent in his personal doctoral journey. Although he does talk some about another student that was in his master’s program that went on to get her Ph.D. and now works at Univ of Akron. I need to ask him more about this student and how she has influenced him.

He is the only participant I have had who talks about grades in his doctoral coursework. His concern with getting “Bs” is interesting.

He also told me that he may be one of the only P-T doc students in his program. This may explain why I had such a hard time getting a participant to represent the School of HS.

I really need to transcribe this interview to get a better sense of his experience. I feel like on some level I do understand Andrew’s experience but on another level, I do not connect with him very well. Maybe it is because he is a man dealing with a wife and children? Maybe it could be because he is a parent? Maybe because he is in a different program with expectations that differ substantially from the program in which I am enrolled? His situations is perplexing to me and even though on some level I understand his situation, on another level I feel alienated from his experience and am concerned if I will be able to fully understand his experience.

George in rm 411 WH April 8 at 5pm

I was surprised at the excitement that George brought to this interview. He actually seemed disappointed that this was the final interview . . . imagine that! George added more people to his visual representation to indicate the amount of help that he recognizes he will need in his doctoral journey. Also, he talked about the fact that he often times struggles with allowing himself to ask others for help because in his mind anyways, he considers asking for help as a sign of weakness.

I hope and think that George has benefited from this series of interviews because he told me that he was thinking about when he does his dissertation working part-time and doing the dissertation part-time. He is politically savvy.

It is interesting to see that he thinks that his self-esteem may improve when he becomes a scholar. He believes that he has an inferiority complex as a counselor. He
hopes that when he becomes a scholar that he will have more credibility in the world. He
does not want his motivation to be to get the title of “doctor” to make himself more
credible but it seems like he will be happy to get this. I feel similarly to George and
maybe this is why I can empathize with his position so well.

Conflict resolution is also a concern for George, not only in his doctoral program
but also in his work environment. He spoke about grades being due and the deadline
confusion that he had. So this may be an important theme for George that he has trouble
with conflict resolution and really wants everyone to be amicable and to “just get along.”
Similar to the issue of self-esteem, I also feel concerned with conflict resolution issues
and always strive to avoid conflict so in many ways I can really relate to George and feel
very in touch with his feelings and the position he is in a full-time counselor and part-
time doctoral student.
APPENDIX G

SAMPLES OF RESEARCH MEMOS
Appendix G

Samples of Research Memos

May 19, 2010

So here are some first thoughts from the interviews with Olivia and Jennifer:

- Jennifer refers to her peer, Olivia, as a “friend” and this seems to be key to the peer mentorship relationship is that they view one another as true “friends.” This is important!
- Jennifer talks about the relationship she has with her “dissertation buddy” (Olivia) as an emotional supportive environment.
- Jennifer believes that Olivia will be a person who she will maintain contact with after she completes her PhD.
- Jennifer talks about this relationship as being needed for her to continue working on the dissertation. She believes she may have quit by now if it had not been for Olivia “kicking her in the butt.”
- Olivia has been Julie’s BIGGEST support for her in her doctoral journey!
- Olivia felt a great deal of support from Jennifer on a deeper level than she experienced even with colleagues at work.
- Jennifer was Olivia’s connection that she made that was significant and lasting throughout coursework and into the dissertation phase.
- Olivia believes that the connection with another doctoral student should just happen naturally as a part of taking courses together and supporting one another’s scholarly work (i.e., reading each others dissertation drafts).
- Jennifer was Olivia major source of support for her doctoral journey!

Major theme:
I believe the relationship between these two women (Olivia and Jennifer) is the key to understanding peer mentorship in its ideal form . . . I think this is really what makes this relationship so important for both of them and what can be used to build that theoretical framework of socialization for part-time doctoral students through peer mentorship.

To think, Jennifer said to me today that she wasn’t sure what she would have to contribute to my study . . . I told her I knew she would have much to offer and she DID!

I look forward to formulating some follow-up questions for the interview next week and writing this beautiful narrative of the story of this woman and her experience with a much important peer who has helped her SO much!

This is a story that needs to be told . . . I need to get this out there. How exciting?!??!
October 30, 2010

Thoughts on the dissertation data:

For doctoral students:

- Socialization is the responsibility of the student, not faculty.
- Students should seek out opportunities to be involved on campus and to experience research before the dissertation in an area related to their interests.
- Students should create their own opportunities, consider research options and try to involve other students in this work.
- Students should engage with others during coursework, write papers together, undergo a research opportunity, submit work for conference presentation and journals alone AND with other students/faculty.
- Students need to take the initiative! Getting involved in research will not happen spontaneously or by “invite” from faculty, it needs to originate from the student.

For faculty:

- Encourage students to work together.
- Engage students in class to engage in research together, extend the opportunity to do this work over several semesters or years.
- Encourage students to take the initiative to create their own projects while in the coursework phase. Work with students to create research protocol, pertinent literature reviews, drawing conclusions from data, writing results for publication and presentation at conferences.
- Give course credit for students working collaboratively, writing for publication, presenting at conferences, writing grants. IF these activities are really what counts as socialization, this should be part of coursework!
- Teach how to write with collaborative partners (i.e., the process, revision, expectations for conference proposals, publication).
- Require students to submit their work (especially as a group) for conference presentation or publication as part of course expectations. Maybe one step at a time for courses taken in a sequence?
- Require students to attend professional development activities (i.e., through official University student organizations/Doctoral Student Forum, Faculty Professional Development Center, Brown Bag Sessions, Conferences on or near campus). Be present at these activities if encouraging student attendance. Write conference proposals with students.
- Invite students to be a part of their research. Create activities for students to do that can help even if the student is not physically present on campus. Much of this work can be done via email, Internet, or in other virtual environments.
- Create opportunities for students that allow each student to do a certain task (i.e., review literature or collect data for a study). If the activity includes things the
student can do on their own, it is more likely the student will benefit from this work.
APPENDIX H

NARRATIVE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES FOR PARTICIPANTS
Kim is in the first year of her doctoral studies majoring in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in literacy and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) studies in School 2 in the College. Kim has also been an elementary school teacher for 29 years in a district some distance from campus. She had thought about pursuing her doctorate for some time now but she feels “life gets in the way” and had made her decision to enroll in the doctoral program only recently. She feels her journey so far has been “this whirl-windy, chaotic feel since I am teaching full-time still.” She hopes after her next year of teaching that she can retire and continue her coursework full-time as a graduate assistant. Meanwhile she will take one course per semester until she retires from her teaching career.

Kim is also President of a statewide professional education organization and was preparing for “the big conference at the end of the month” during her first year of doctoral studies. This along with her graduate work combined with teaching full-time has left her with little “time for myself.” However, she is excited about “being in grad school” and is hopeful about her future and the doors that will open for her when she completes her Ph.D. In recent years, she has become tired of her teaching career; she feels like “it is just all getting old.”

The stimulus for Kim’s decision to go back to graduate school came from her participation in The National Writing Project five years earlier. She had always viewed

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herself as a writer and even “fancied myself a wanna be novelist” so the opportunity was a perfect fit. She found her experience with this professional development opportunity to provide her with “all these contacts . . . that is why I am here.” She has even been “published in one journal” as a result of her work with The National Writing Project and continued work in that capacity as a teacher consultant.

Due to her participation in the National Writing Project, Kim was able to connect with several professors at the large university in Northeast Ohio prior to her official admission to the program and this has made her transition to doctoral studies seamless. These professors are also involved in the online environment with the statewide professional education organization and “kind of tried to push me into the program” of doctoral studies. To Kim, these professors seemed more like “colleagues” before she started her doctoral program and this has made her transition easier and she feels “very comfortable talking to them and going to them.”

Kim has found a great deal of support from her fellow doctoral students since she started taking courses. Several of her peers have now been enrolled with her in multiple classes and she has enjoyed the opportunity to “build a friendship” with these students. She has found “it is really great how now online, you know, email, you shoot things back and forth.” She has found a real “camaraderie” with her peers and has even developed a small group of close friends whom she meets with before class to talk to and she feels they have “really kind of bonded.”

Kim has a very supportive family that she leans on a great deal since she has started her doctoral journey. Her daughter is a master’s student concurrently with Kim’s
doctoral studies who is very much interested in similar issues in regards to LGBT studies. Her daughter is now serving as a resource person for her who she can “bounce ideas off of” and is able to obtain literature and different perspectives on the topic from her. She has found “our family has always with my [gay] nephew and everything, we have always been advocates” in support of LGBT persons. Kim’s husband has been very supportive as well mainly because he is “the most laid back guy” and he is very supportive of the fact that she will be gone a lot more and even when she is home, she will be “working a lot . . . at the computer for hours and hours and hours.”

Kim was initially planning on a future as a professor after she retires from full-time teaching but she has now re-evaluated that plan. Now, she hopes to work someday in “maybe [a] diversity center, LGBT centers, or similar environment.” She hopes to look at “writing in all its forms as therapy, traditional and new literacies, social networking and things with LGBT population.” She came to this realization as she thought about a future in teaching teachers and found that she really does not want to engage in this kind of work because she is “very disillusioned with education right now, with you know, the ‘No Child Left Behind’ and all the testing, testing, and testing, and we teach the test no matter what anyone tells you.” Plus, she recognized, “I am not going to be in the tenure track. This is my second career. I am retiring from public education so, I don’t want to be a full-time professor.”

George

George is in the first year of his doctoral studies; his major is cultural foundations within School 3 of the College. He is also a guidance counselor at a public high school in
a neighboring county. George takes two courses each semester as he works to complete his coursework. George is legally blind so he needs to have a support system available to assist him in driving to campus, as well as with reading and study. He has a CCTV at home and has taken advantage of digital resources that he can blow up to 400% so he can easily read them. George feels driven to complete his Ph.D. because he feels like “I’ve got ability and I feel like I’ve got a duty and a responsibility to help to try to improve the profession, you know, of education.”

George has great support from his family on his doctoral journey. His wife was also a graduate student at the large university in Northeast Ohio and helps George navigate the University, especially how to utilize the online resources, email, and the library. Not only does she help George with the details of being a graduate student, but she has also taken time off work with George to drive to a city in a neighboring state to attend a national conference, “not only because she wants to help, but I think also too because she wants to learn, and it was a beneficial experience for us both.” George also says that he is “very lucky that I still have my parents and they are able to help me get here.” His parents, brother, and sister also provide George with emotional encouragement and have provided him with “a great sounding board” to keep him going through the process to obtain his Ph.D.

George has found great encouragement in interacting with his peers within his classes. He enjoys the more “student-centered” approach he has found in his doctoral studies. He believes that it is important to recognize that you can learn from any other person, whether it “be students in your class; that could be professors; that could be your
advisor; anybody, you know that you really come in contact with that you learn from.” However, George did have one interesting experience in one of his first classes where he was passed a note from another student that said, “I don’t like this girl because she thinks she knows everything.” He was taken off guard by this situation and finds it interesting to see that even in doctoral studies the human element of jealousy, frustration, and irritation persist. Sometimes he is concerned with conflict resolution in the graduate classroom and is careful to choose his words carefully in an attempt to more accurately express his ideas and understanding of the complex concepts discussed in this environment.

George considers “the most fun, the most learning I’ve had has been . . . outside of the classroom, has been at those conferences I went to, especially the one here.” He believes in the social networking that takes place at conferences. He enjoys the opportunity to be in conversation with his peers and his advisor and other professors at these events. He really believes “you learn so much about them, how they act, how they treat people, and that personal interaction. I learned more about people that day than I have sitting through a semester-worth of class.”

George feels very well-supported in his work environment. The administrators in the school district he works in seem interested in maximizing George’s potential and utilizing his work to better the district. George serves on different school committees in an effort to work hard to keep the good-will of the administration as he embarks on his doctoral journey. He is hoping when he gets to the dissertation phase of his program that he will be able to take a sabbatical from his work so he can fully concentrate on the
challenging work of the dissertation. He is also hoping that he will continue to experience positive relations with the administrators in the school district he works in because he knows it will be critical to his success. George is very aware of the political realities he must face in both his work environment and also in the doctoral student classroom.

**Penny**

Penny is in her first year of doctoral studies in higher education administration in School 3 in the College. She is also an admissions representative for a career college in a nearby city where she works 45 hours a week. Penny is a highly focused and driven young woman who has always been academically motivated. She was recently married and is now adjusting not only to her doctoral coursework but also her new role as wife. She is very excited as she embarks on her doctoral journey but she is also cognizant of how this process makes her feel “caged in by my studies in a way.” She feels this way because she is “an extreme socialite” so she has had to make sacrifices in the social part of her being in order to give her doctoral studies and her work the attention she feels that it deserves.

Penny considers her family, her husband, and her religious faith to be the most important part of her support that she has had thus far on her doctoral journey. Her family is very supportive of her academic commitment and often asks her about her experiences and is excited to hear about what she is working on. Her husband serves as a sounding board for her ideas and provides constant encouragement through his actions and words, through email, and just letting her know how proud he is of her. He also
helps out a lot more in recent days with household chores to give her a little more time for her studies. Penny’s faith is extremely important not only to her but also in her relationship with her husband. She keeps her Sundays sacred in attending worship services, talking to her pastor, going out to eat with her husband, and often attending workshop classes at her church. She finds this to be “a weekly rejuvenation spiritually that I like; that really helps a lot.”

Penny has not been able to get involved as quickly as she would like in the socializing aspect of her doctoral education. In many ways, she feels like a commuter student who is not around much and does not get to take advantage of the “social professional peer network.” Also, she has had several occasions where some of her peers were taken aback by her young age. She does recognize that she may not have as much professional experience as some of her peers but she knows this will come in time. She is invested in the importance of social interaction but at this time in her doctoral studies, she simply is not able to engage in on-campus activities. She will be making a job change soon so she will be more available to participate in these activities. She knows how important it is for her to take advantage of the multiple levels of experiences her peers have had, especially those who are further along in the process.

Penny depends a great deal on her social networking in all situations, including her doctoral education. In her undergraduate years, Penny was highly involved in a sorority on her campus and became involved in the executive board as well at the national level. She has even worked as an advisor for her sorority after her graduation. During her master’s program, she also was on an executive board for graduate association
of student personnel administrators. She is the type of person who recognizes the
importance of social interaction with others and even says she is “the person who if you
introduced them to somebody, they’re in their element . . . if you isolate them, they’re
miserable, that’s me, totally.”

Penny believes her future goal in the short-term will be in academic advising,
resident life or athletic administration. In the long-term, she potentially sees herself as a
vice president of student affairs, or as a senior woman athletic director for a medium
sized university. She would also like to start a family within the next several years so she
does see herself as a wife and mother as well as in an educational administration position.

Elmer

Elmer is a first year doctoral student in cultural foundations of education within
School 3 in the College. He is also a full-time educational manager for a neighboring
county’s park district. Elmer takes one or two courses a semester in his effort to
complete his doctoral coursework. He works at least 40 hours per week in his career as
the educational manager for the park district and he recognizes that his doctoral student
career will likely be a long process; he is in no rush to complete his coursework and
dissertation. He estimates his graduation date to be at least six years in the future.

Elmer found motivation to begin his doctoral studies on completing his master’s
degree six years earlier. Elmer investigated several graduate schools in his exploration of
possibilities for his doctoral education. He found that the large university in Northeast
Ohio had a program that was something he would be interested in pursuing. This was an
important decision for Elmer.
Elmer has found the open door policy that he enjoys with certain professors, especially his advisor, to be very helpful in his progress as a doctoral student. He also finds a great deal of support from his wife who he says is his “number one cheerleader, and she wants me to pursue this and she wants me to go after this because she knows that this is my personal goal that I have.” Elmer also finds further support from his parents and brothers and has a desire to instill the value of education in his younger brother who is still in high school. However, even though he feels supported, he still feels pulled in many different directions as he tries to be a good husband and father, employee, and colleague.

Elmer has experienced interaction with his peers in his doctoral studies to be somewhat competitive. In the second class Elmer took in his coursework, he was told by another student “you intimidate us.” He did not know how to take this comment. As a result, Elmer “toned it down a little bit” and waited for others to respond in class before he was quick to interject his ideas. This experience made him aware on a different level of how other students perceive him in the classroom. He very much wants to learn in this academic experience about what it means to be a scholar and to read critically and deeply. In some cases, he finds the over-competitive nature of doctoral studies to be frustrating; in other cases, he finds the lack of effort that some students give to their studies equally frustrating.

Elmer does have an important peer relationship with another student in a different program in the College. He has found the relationship with this “close friend” to be important in learning about what it takes to be an effective doctoral student. This friend
has even invited Elmer to work with him on a project that may culminate in a conference presentation and paper. He looks forward to these future collaborative efforts with his peers, even if they are outside of his doctoral program.

Elmer has a rich professional network outside of the University that he can rely on for interactions in his doctoral studies. He plans on taking advantage of his work environment as grounds for his research. Furthermore, he is quite able and willing to interact with other people in “local colleges and other agencies” that he is hoping to involve in his research. He hopes that relationships will “materialize organically” within the college but he also recognizes that he already has a rich network of individuals who have helped him develop his professionalism that he will continue to interact with in the future.

Elmer does experience a certain lack of understanding of his doctoral studies by his superiors and inferiors at his work place. He has distributed readings from his coursework to employees on staff at the park district, but they usually do not find this “fun reading.” Also, the director of the park district seems to be concerned that Elmer is getting “something practical” out of his doctoral studies. He believes he is getting practical knowledge out of his studies but finds it challenging to communicate this to his colleagues at work. Sometimes he believes that his superiors and colleagues in the workplace have the perception that Elmer may be “wasting time on his studies.”

**Tina**

Tina is in the first year of her doctoral studies; her major is educational psychology within the School 1 of the College. She is also a teacher at a private Jewish
school and holds a graduate assistantship. Tina is taking three courses a semester in order to complete her doctoral coursework in a timely fashion. She refers to herself as “being on a mission” to complete her doctorate. One of the reasons why she is so driven to complete her Ph.D. is because her father also earned his doctorate (Ed.D.) when Tina was a child.

Tina considers the most important part of obtaining her Ph.D. as “the stamina that it requires.” Tina has a really open relationship with her main advisor and considers the guidance that he has given her and her peers essential to success. She had even had opportunity to be a part of an informal cohort where she meets with her advisor and four to six other doctoral students every other Wednesday to discuss research, whether it be presentations at conferences, discussion about curriculum vitas, or individual research questions. She says that this interaction with her professor and peers who she refers to at “this little cohort” has been “probably the most beneficial thing I have had” in the doctoral experience.

Tina gets a lot of support from her husband and her family in her doctoral journey. Her husband is very supportive and even helps with housework. Her parents take care of her dogs on her class nights and her father provides guidance on what it takes to get a doctorate as a result of his experience many years before.

Tina is considering a non-tenure track professorship when she completes her Ph.D. She is much more interested in teaching than she is in being forced to engage in research in an attempt to secure tenure. She wants to do research for herself, not simply to obtain tenure at a University somewhere. She does not see herself as one to keep track
of her doctoral student peers not because she does not get along with them but because
she does not do well at keeping track of people, especially when there is a physical
distance involved in the relationship.

Tina considers the two most significant challenges in her doctoral studies as the
difficulties that you can have with certain professors who seem disorganized and unclear
about their expectations. Recently, Tina spearheaded a letter writing campaign among
her classmates to address issues related to teaching in one of her classes. The professor
she was addressing in this letter writing effort is “a horrific teacher” in Tina and her
classmates’ opinions, and they believe that something needs to be done to address this
situation. She also gets frustrated with “the parking sharks who circle around and around
in the parking lot.” She does not feel overly challenged intellectually but she does have a
lot of “juggling some stuff but it is not really like a mental challenge."

**Jo Ann**

Jo Ann is in the second year of her doctoral studies; her major is in Curriculum
and Instruction within School 2 of the College. She is also a full-time non-tenure track
faculty member in the College of Nursing. Jo Ann has taken a long path in her academic
journey from an Associate’s degree in Nursing to her present doctoral studies. She never
envisioned herself (early in my career) being in doctoral studies but has made it to this
point as a result of a “winding road” and a commitment to continued professional
development. She has always believed she is “a person who seeks out new experiences
in anything I do, so the same was true with my nursing.” Jo Ann sees getting her Ph.D.
as a personal goal because “nobody in our family history has ever earned a Ph.D.”
Jo Ann spent five years while she was a practicing nurse educator as a member on the State Board of Nursing. This appointment “took a significant amount of my time” and put any consideration of Ph.D. “on hold.” However, she believes the time she spent in this position to have “enhanced my career” and “made me far more marketable in my nursing career but has really delayed my progress on my studies.” She does not regret this “detour” in her professional journey, but rather sees this as part of the process in her scholarly development.

Jo Ann presently teaches five classes a semester in the College of Nursing while she is concurrently enrolled in two doctoral courses in Curriculum and Instruction. She feels it is “a bit of a load” but she is very focused on completing her doctoral program “in a timely manner.” She really wants to complete her doctorate to “have time on the other end of the degree and to be productive and to develop a good amount of research.” She feels challenged in a positive fashion from her coursework and has the advantage of having “used my authority and perceived power to find out information” from her colleagues as a full-time employee of the University. She feels this is important because there was not an orientation provided from the outset of her doctoral program.

Jo Ann has enjoyed the interactions that she has had in her coursework with her fellow students. She feels that she uses her peers as important support people and believes “that’s been one of the most enriching aspects of being a doctoral student is I’ve met some really cool people that I really like.” She enjoys the opportunity to step outside of her typical nursing colleague circle and to connect with other people with different professional interests. She especially relishes the time she gets to work with her peers on
classroom projects. She believes “I think relationships with other people are essential to broaden your own being.” She hopes to maintain contact with her doctoral student peers after completing her Ph.D. She even considers the possibility of “doing joint research” or “other types of collaborations if things work out.”

Jo Ann feels that she has gained much of her socialization to the academy through her experience as a non-tenure track faculty member. She has “learned about that role by observation of peers because I’ve seen . . . I’ve had good friends and colleagues go through the whole tenure process and the grant-writing process, and the anxiety of trying to get all of these things accomplished in the short amount of time you have to go up for tenure.” She even witnessed the struggles endured by one of her colleagues when she was not granted tenure in the institution.

Jo Ann plans on continuing in higher education in her future. She would consider transitioning to a tenure-track position if the job becomes available. She is excited but intimidated by the research process and is very uncertain about the actual details involved. However, she does feel at least somewhat ready for the task because of her “years of administration and regulation” and her understanding that there are missing pieces in the present literature, especially on teaching in the online environment.

Joey

Joey is in his second year of his doctoral coursework in Higher Education Administration in School 3 in the College. He is also an Assistant Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at the large university in Northeast Ohio where he works full-time. Joey has a wide variety of educational experiences in his background. He holds an
Associates degree in chemistry, a BA in Physical Sciences, MPA, MBA, and a MA in Technology as well as an Ed.S. in Higher Education Administration. Not only does he have a wide variety of educational experience, but he also has military education and experience including 28 years as an officer and has been decorated numerous times. Joey also has political experience, has served as congressional staff assistant, and presently holds a city council seat in a nearby city where he makes his home.

Joey has been an employee at the large university in Northeast Ohio in numerous roles for the past 16 years and has experienced socialization to the University through these positions. Joey had difficulty in making the decision to go for his Ph.D. because he was anxious about doing the writing sample in the application process. He was able to transition from his Ed.S. to his Ph.D. so this reduced some of the stress for him. However, his running for political office did create difficulty in continuing his education and he really feels that “life often times gets in the way of taking classes.”

During Joey’s first year of doctoral studies, he experienced a “health problem” that “put me out of commission for a couple of months.” This combined with the commitment he has to his city council seat has made his progress through his doctoral coursework lengthy.

Joey struggles in his coursework to find the time to get to class from his busy job and often finds scheduling the courses difficult. Furthermore, when he “looks around the room” in many of his classes, he often finds he is “the oldest guy there.” Still he is in pursuit of his Ph.D. because he knows that in his chosen field of Higher Education Administration, “if you want to get ahead, you gotta have a Ph.D.”
Joey has found the support that he has from his wife to be important in his success as a doctoral student. He hasn’t had the opportunity to connect with his fellow students because he is so busy between work, the city council seat, and family commitments. Furthermore, he has already experienced socialization to the academy in his position the College of Arts and Sciences where he is “seeing what it takes for promotion and tenure . . . publications . . . and seen what it takes” to be successful in a University setting. He also has a lot of contacts throughout the state and beyond that allow him to feel like he can call on others for help if need be.

Joey desires to complete his doctoral studies and to complete his work commitments and in four years retire. It is in his retirement that he hopes to take a position teaching or administration at a different University or community college outside the area. He does want to complete his doctorate in a reasonable amount of time because he wants to be “young enough to go do something else.”

Julia

Julia is in her second year of doctoral studies majoring in Education Administration in Higher Education in School 3 in the College. She is also employed full-time as a Special Assistant to the Dean at a branch campus of the large university in Northeast Ohio. Her duties in this position include a wide variety of responsibilities ranging from providing advising for students, to providing student programming to scheduling classes. Julia made a promise to herself that if she ever had opportunity to be employed by a University that has a doctoral program that she would take advantage of it. She benefits from tuition waiver and does not have to pay for her courses because she is a
full-time employee of the University. However, she also realizes that her progress through the program will be slower and that she will not be able to be as involved on the main campus as she would like to be.

Julia has not been able to participate “much in any of the structural things that have been provided for us, but I have been able to form study groups and support with other doctoral students and even the master’s level students as well.” However, Julia finds that she desires to have greater contact with doctoral students that are in a similar place as she, where they, like her are “trying to balance, you know, work, life, and school.” She has met with success in connecting with a small group of doctoral students in a law class and was able to engage in study sessions for the content intensive course in a previous semester. She looks forward to the next semester where she will be taking class and continuing the study group with some of her peers whom she has started to develop relationships with on campus.

Julia finds great support in being involved in “an education community.” She feels somewhat disconnected from her peers and hopes that she can find more support as she moves through her program. She wishes that she could have the opportunity to “just talk about stuff in the middle of the day when it pops in your head” and realizes as a part-time student, she will not have this level of engagement with other doctoral students. She believes it is important to be a part of “an education community” because it allows you to feel “that you’re not going though it alone . . . the other one is I see where I am in relation to someone else, and I don’t feel as stupid.”
Julia believes she is “pretty naïve” about what is expected of her as far as being socialized to a future career in the academy in higher education administration. She is at this point “starting to get nervous about” the expectations. Her experience in her doctoral education thus far has been in regards to completing her class assignments and obligations. She has only recently begun thinking about the dissertation and she knows that this is something that she will need to think more about in the coming days. She feels that her doctoral experience has been mainly “a learn-as-I-go process.”

Julia receives support from her husband and family as she works on her doctorate. Her husband “understands that it’s important” for her to better her career. He serves as a “sounding board for a lot of my ideas at times.” His full-time employment also serves as a means for greater stability in their relationship. He is also very understanding of her need to commit time to her studies at home. Her parents also provide support towards this time intensive work towards the Ph.D. by providing her with encouragement and not making her feel guilty about less frequent visits and the amount of work that she has to do to be engaged in this kind of an academic pursuit.

Julia eventually hopes to work as either a vice president or as a dean of students after she completes her doctorate. She really has a desire to “move up into the administrative ranks in higher education.” She knows she will graduate and she never thinks that “I’m not going to finish.” She just takes the tasks one at a time as they come and continues moving forward with her eventual graduation looming on the horizon.
Matthew

Matthew is in his third year of doctoral studies in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in math education within School 2 of the College. Matthew is a full-time teacher in a high school in a neighboring state. Matthew commutes to the large university in Northeast Ohio at least twice a week and his drive to campus is an hour and a half each way. Matthew is extremely involved in the district where he teaches serving as a Title 1 Mathematics Coach and also as the local Teacher Association’s President. When Matthew initially started his doctorate, he had every intention of graduating and segueing into a “fluffy professorship” where you “work four hours a day twice a week.” However, as a direct result of his doctoral studies, Matthew is now considering staying in the classroom and possibly even pursuing teaching math at the elementary or middle school level where he “wants to do it better than anyone.”

When Matthew started his doctoral studies, he had every intention of training to be a quantitative methodologist and to teach this at the college level. His doctoral studies have “put him on his face” because as a result, he now feels more invested in K-12 education and wants to stay in the classroom because in many ways he feels he has “more teaching to do.”

Matthew even considered early in his doctoral program at the large university in Northeast Ohio that he may have made a mistake in his choice of institution. After his first year, he was invited to a premier University to interview for a fellowship. He decided not to take the position when he had a change of heart about what his doctoral
education was all about. Furthermore, he did not want to leave behind his family and girlfriend who he is considering asking her hand in marriage in the coming days.

Matthew feels in many ways that he has been forced as a result of being engaged in doctoral studies that he has “to cheat everything.” He perceives this experience of putting him in the position where he feels he has to “cheat my relationship with significant other, spending time with my family . . . the whole continuum.” He feels that he has had to “parse out what’s most important” and do less in his teaching, his graduate reading and work, as well as his sleep. Much of the time, Matthew feels he is simply trying to “keep my head above water.”

Matthew feels as though he is on the perimeter in relation to his doctoral student peers. He believes that the main limitation in getting close to these people is because of the geographic distance he lives and works from campus. He had considered a GA position at one point in time but he really was not able to give up his $50,000 a year high school teaching position in place of a low-paying GA stipend. In many cases, though, the limitation is not his alone. In speaking to his doctoral student peers, he often perceives that they have little time or energy to invest in him. He does feel that they “pushed my own thinking” within the construct of the classroom and he does enjoy the conversations he has with these peers, but as far as personal connections, he feels he has few. He has his peers’ emails and their phone numbers but has not yet taken the step to reach out to them beyond the classroom. He feels he just “hasn’t forged that relationship” and that he is “not plugged in.” Matthew believes that one way to approach this problem would be to establish “a residency for like-minded individuals” in which doctoral students would
have the opportunity to be in conversation with one another. He believes in some way, this would especially help the many part-time doctoral students who feel like “pseudo-doctoral students” and allow them to feel more a part of the academic community.

Matthew will be getting engaged to be married soon and he sees his future as consisting of being “a committed teacher, a loving husband and someone that enjoys life.” He also sees himself working with other teachers in his school district on becoming better math teachers and creating innovative professional development opportunities for his colleagues. The idea of the “fluffy professorship” has been replaced by the need to be “generative and make a social contribution” to the teaching career in which he is so invested.

Andrew

Andrew is in his third year of the coursework of his doctoral studies in exercise physiology within the school of HS in the College. He is also an exercise physiologist at a hospital in a nearby city where he works full-time. He also has another part-time job that he is doing as a campaign director and Internet marketing analyst. He is also married and has two young daughters at home. Andrew feels exhausted most of the time and oftentimes this leads to feelings of “frustration, hopelessness, and helplessness.” He struggles with “accepting less of what I can do” and that he has “not reached my full potential.” He feels his biggest constraint is not having enough time to do justice to any of his work, doctoral studies included. He often feels like he is “spinning my wheels.” Andrew is very concerned about holding himself accountable to a high level of academic achievement and has feelings of inadequacy when he cannot perform as he wishes.
However, he believes completing his doctorate will be a “grand achievement and greatest achievement in my life.” Andrew also wishes academic achievement for his family and desires a professorial position so his wife and kids will “be able to go to school for free or at a huge discount.”

Andrew feels his professors at the large university in Northeast Ohio have been “extremely supportive” and feels like he has “allies in that regard.” They have allowed Andrew to count some of his work as research hours and have cooperated with him in placing undergraduates at his hospital for internships. They do seem to understand that it is going to take him longer to complete the degree and they also understand that he will need to complete his research in his workplace. He understands that his research will need to be “mutually beneficial to [his employer], mutually beneficial to me.” At this time, he is somewhat frustrated with the process of approving his research and realizes that he has a lot of work to do before he can even begin thinking about engaging in the research.

Andrew receives critical support for his doctoral studies from his immediate and extended family. His mother-in-law provides a lot in terms of childcare for his two daughters. His wife is very supportive and understands the time he must commit to his studies. However, he feels torn a lot of the time between spending time with his family and children and accomplishing his work and doctoral studies. He observes, “It is tough, it is a very tough balance.” In some ways, he feels that he may never have time for himself and feels guilty because he cannot fully enjoy the time he has with his family because he is always anxious about completing his doctoral coursework.
Andrew feels like he gets a lot of support from his co-workers and boss in terms of understanding that he is taking classes and working toward his doctorate. Many of his professional colleagues are also working towards a graduate degree (usually the masters). His “boss has been just really awesome about it” in allowing him to leave work early and covering time that he was missing with other staff or even making up the time herself. For quite some time, the hospital even offered tuition reimbursement.

Andrew has an important peer mentor/friend (Judy) in a student who was also in his master’s program who has now completed her doctorate and has moved on to a professorship at another University. She had often times shared her notes with not only him but “all the graduate assistants in the program and anybody else. She sent out her notes to everyone.” Even though Andrew’s peer has now graduated, he still maintains occasional email contact with her. He finds her encouraging demeanor to be very helpful in providing emotional encouragement in the process of his coursework.

Andrew has not had any experience yet with writing for publication but he has attended a number of professional conferences and he has also been asked to speak as “an invited speaker” and “to support groups.” He does not attend as many conferences as he would like because there is no money available for professional development through the hospital due to budget cuts. Andrew is concerned that he has not had a lot of experience with writing and this may create a problem when he gets to the dissertation phase. He feels because he is not present on campus full-time he is missing out on this important component of his doctoral education. He notes, “I commute, I am not a GA, you know.”
Andrew has ambitions to be a full-time, tenure track professor at a University when he completes his Ph.D. He does “enjoy teaching” and “feels very comfortable” in the University setting. He believes he could teach anatomy, exercise testing programming, and topics related to EKG (electrocardiogram). He also possibly has ambitions to work his way up to being a Dean at a University. His director/boss believes he is “an excellent teacher, has drive, good charisma and good leadership” as a skill set to move forward into the future.

Phyllis

Phyllis is in her fifth year of doctoral study coursework and she is a student in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in literacy within School 2 in the College. Phyllis has always worked toward her doctorate as a part-time student. She started her doctoral studies as a teacher and then had a difficult pregnancy and finally gave birth to her daughter. This process amounted to a year that she was out of coursework and her work at the University. Phyllis returned to doctoral study after the birth of her daughter but due to her parenting duties, she is only able to take one class each semester. She is concerned that she will not be able to complete her doctorate in the time allotted (eight years) for the endeavor.

Phyllis struggles to find balance between her life responsibilities to her family, friends and daughter and with her doctoral studies. She recognizes that she needs to maintain a certain “chemistry” or “harmony” in the myriad of things she needs to be thinking about as she works to become a scholar. She is also concerned that because she is no longer teaching and is “just a student” that she will lose her perspective on life in
the classroom. Also, she is concerned about finding the appropriate topic to research that will matter to others and allow her to find meaningful employment in the academy. In many ways, Phyllis struggles with the theoretical aspect of scholarship and feels that if theory is removed from practice, it becomes irrelevant to the practitioner who is working everyday within the confines of school environments. She is concerned that her own work will have meaning for real teachers and the work they do.

Phyllis found initial encouragement from her mother in considering pursuing her Ph.D. However, her mother believed that she should look at going “into higher education administration.” One of Phyllis’s first teaching jobs was in a school district where teachers were encouraged to pursue excellent professional development and even their doctorate. She had opportunity to work with a good number of individuals who were enrolled in a doctoral program. Even before landing her teaching job at the professionally encouraging school district, Phyllis graduated from the Honors College as an academically talented teacher candidate (within a cohort of academically talented teacher education program). While teaching, Phyllis had also completed a Master’s degree in Educational Administration but did not really want to become a principal; instead, she took a job as a Gifted Coordinator where she decided to pursue her doctoral studies.

Phyllis really believes that the doctoral program should be more individually tailored to each student. She found much of the coursework she took in the beginning of her doctoral program to be instructive in preparing her for more recent study but she has also found some of the required courses to be less pertinent or “superfluous” to her
Phyllis considers one of the most important parts of her scholarly development in developing close, personal relationships with important colleagues. She has found her work with a small “core group” to be essential. Also, she has found relationships that she has established with other peers as well as interested professors to provide her with an excellent foundation towards developing her scholarship. When speaking of the “core group” of peers, Phyllis indicates, “this is what it means to be . . . part of the academy or to be in a doctoral program.”

The scaffolded nature of the small group of peers and the professor that Phyllis works with has provided her with “a ladder to you, to help you scale the wall.” The act of engaging in genuine inquiry has been an essential part of learning what will be required in the academy. Furthermore, the work that she engages in with the “core group” has provided her with “a big social outlet for me” or “an intellectual outlet . . . it keeps me grounded.” Even when Phyllis received a rejection for a paper she had submitted for publication, she found support from members of the group because in many ways, they are “just like a cheerleading squad.”

Recently, Phyllis considered quitting the doctoral program because she felt like she was “getting pulled in too many directions.” She sought support from one of her peers in the “core group” but also from her husband. Her husband encouraged her to try another semester of classes before she quit and he also provides her with editing
assistance (writing for business, clarity, precision) with all the writing that is required in doctoral studies.

Phyllis considers her future in working at a teaching college. She is not interested in the constant pressure to publish and pressure in “this race for tenure.” She is afraid she will be limited in positions she can take because she will need to stay located in the same city in which she currently resides due to her husband’s employment. She wishes in her career in higher education to integrate the reality of life in K-12 schools into her teaching and to remain grounded in the actual experiences of teachers because she will always see herself as a teacher practitioner.

Abby

Abby is in her third year of her doctoral program in higher education administration in School 3 in the College. She is completing her final semester of coursework and will be taking her comprehensive exams and writing her dissertation proposal in the next semester. She had previously completed a MS in biological sciences and a MA in educational leadership. Abby holds a full-time position in a small sized local college as the Director of Service-Learning and Community Service. Abby is very invested in furthering her education and the opportunities that it will provide.

When Abby initially interviewed for admission to her doctoral program, she found the experience to be “a confusing interview.” She even considered that she might not be admitted to the program at the end of the interview because she felt like the interviewer “wasn’t listening to anything that I said through the whole thing” and at one point even laughed at her. She was even “left hanging” for a substantial amount of time
after the follow-up interview before she heard any more about her status. When she finally was admitted to the program, she experienced a lot of difficulty in navigating the University such as with registration, understanding the online resources of the University including the simple act of how to buy a parking pass. She wishes that there had been some type of orientation to the program or someone who could give her advice about the options she had in the program she was entering. When she finally was officially admitted to classes and was able to figure out the bureaucratic structure of the University, she found that many of the classes she had to take were “too easy” because they were so similar to the courses she had taken in her previous master’s program or even comparable to courses she had taught at her previous institution.

Abby experienced a change in her progress when she entered her second year of the program. She signed up for a study abroad opportunity and was able to travel to Ireland with a group of students as an “independent researcher.” This experience allowed her to think about research as she engaged in this independent study. During the summer of her second year, Abby was enrolled in 18 graduate credit hours, which was very challenging. She did this because she “wanted to knock the doctorate out” and this would enable her to reduce her coursework timeline by an entire year. She was able to manage this impressive academic undertaking but at the same time, she remembers it as being “pretty awful.” Furthermore, she promised her husband that she would never do that again.

When Abby entered the third year of her doctoral study, she was able to engage in another independent ethnographic study. She found this experience to be very beneficial
and it also helped her to better understand and appreciate the process of qualitative research and how it can inform her eventual dissertation work.

Abby has never had “a negative experience . . . with any of my peers in the program.” She recognizes that one of the biggest factors preventing her intensive interactions with her peers at the large university in Northeast Ohio is the distance involved and the fact that she really only interacts with her peers within the construct of class meetings. She does interact with different students via Facebook and this has helped her feel connected to other students and develop “professional networking.” She has experienced socialization through her experience with her colleagues at work at the local college. She believes that she gets “socialization at both places.” These interactions in both her work environment and on campus help her feel like she is “not doing this by myself.” She has heard that a professor in her program is considering establishing a “Saturday cohort program” and while she feels this would be beneficial for some; this probably would not have helped her because she does a lot of Saturday programming for her work at the college.

Abby has a lot of emotion support from her husband and feels like “he is incredibly supportive of this” doctoral student experience. He helps a lot around the house and even helps to “pick up some slack around the house.” Not only does he provide domestic support but he has also provided a critical eye for Abby in proofreading some of her documents and papers. He also makes sure that the car is in good running order for her lengthy commute to work and the large university in Northeast Ohio for her courses. She feels like “we’re very much in this together.” Abby’s parents also provide
her with emotional and financial support to help fund her progress through her doctoral program. Without their financial assistance, Abby doubts she would be able to be engaged in working on her Ph.D.

Abby imagines her future career as a director for “a center for public service or service learning.” She also really enjoys interaction with students so she also considers teaching a course or two each semester, but she has no desire to be a full-time professor. She really wants to find work where she can “incorporate some teaching, some research.” She wants to have the best of both worlds in her future professional life.

**Linda**

Linda is in the third year of her doctoral studies; she has been preparing for and has recently completed her comprehensive exams. She is majoring in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in foreign language education within School 2 in the College. Linda has worked at four jobs while she has pursued her doctoral studies; one of her jobs is as Staff Interpreter for the large university in Northeast Ohio (a full-time position) and the second job is as Video-Relay Interpreter (a part-time position) in a nearby city. Her third job is as a mentor for a School for the Deaf (part-time) and her fourth job (part-time) is teaching one class per semester at the large university in Northeast Ohio. Before coming to doctoral studies, Linda was a full-time non-tenure track faculty member in deaf interpreter preparation program and she was very frustrated in that position; therefore she explored and took some classes in the summer and found the doctoral coursework a “good fit” for her. She feels that her doctoral journey has been “a very colorful experience.” She even believes it has “been happy so far” and has
enjoyed the opportunity to be intellectually engaged in her coursework and planning for her dissertation. However, she also feels she has had to sacrifice “a lot of time,” specifically, “my family time” because of “how much I have to work.”

Linda is financially supporting her family due to her husband’s loss of employment four years ago; he has not been able to find employment in this time period and instead pursued a college degree in Special Education, which he recently completed. This is why she works so much as she is engaged in doctoral studies. However, her husband does provide her a great deal of support because he does all the housework, all the laundry, cooking and cleaning. Her husband also provides her with a “sounding board” for her ideas and he engages with Linda in conversation about her ideas and he “gets the whole thing.” In many ways, she believes her doctoral journey has had a “very positive impact on my marriage” because she has been very communicative with her husband in this process and actually sets aside time each week so they can spend quality time together in discussion.

Linda has been challenged by her doctoral student peers in pursuit of her doctoral studies. She entered her doctoral studies with an unofficial cohort of students who all started the program together. She had extended contact with these peers because “I was in the classes with the same people semester after semester.” However, some of these peer interactions that Linda experienced were “kind of competitive” and she felt in some ways that these interactions were composed of “very interesting dynamics.” She believed on some occasions, the students were trying to “show off for the professor” and due to a lot of “strong personalities in the group” it was sometimes uncomfortable for Linda who
has “a pretty low-key personality.” She remembers one occasion in a class where she made a presentation that was misunderstood by at least one of her peers and in some ways feels “you’ve just missed the whole point of what I was trying to say.” However, because these peers pushed her thinking, she believes “I don’t think I would be where I am today had I not been in these different situations.”

Linda also had an important doctoral student peer who she refers to as “a friend” who she met and engaged with during the grant work she was involved in with one of her professors. She believes this peer may be one of the only people who she will maintain contact with after she completes her doctoral program. They have a very mutually supportive relationship and she “talk[s] to her all the time on the phone.” It was in her work with this “friend” and the grant work they were involved with that “it moved me toward my dissertation topic.” Linda believes that other people who were involved in the grant work were “like-minded and provided a level of thinking which challenged me intellectually.” Another peer is in a discipline very close to hers and was “instrumental in choosing the dissertation topic.”

Linda hopes to take a position as a full-time professor at a university for the deaf after she completes her Ph.D. She hopes that she can fit in to the program at one of these types of universities but she does fear that “it might be too intense.” She also wonders “I don’t know if I’m willing to play some game or jump through some hoops or rings of fire to do it.” She does consider the needs of her family as first and foremost in the decision she will make towards this end. She has two adult children who have special needs and she recognizes that “we’re going to have to make sure that they can go with us.” This
would likely need to be a place with services available to meet their needs, perhaps with access to a larger metropolitan area. She does even consider taking a job at a university that does not have a deaf program and considers the option of writing independent of “a big deaf program.” She believes that this may be helpful because “of my age right now . . . I think that I couldn’t tolerate, you know, all that clatter and chatter” and she feels “I don’t have anything to prove in that respect.”

Eddy

Eddy is a doctoral candidate in his third year of doctoral studies. He is majoring in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in middle childhood in School 2 in the College. Eddy is also a full-time Spanish teacher in a nearby high school as well as an adjunct professor of education in a two small local private colleges and the large university in Northeast Ohio. Eddy feels his entire doctoral experience while teaching full-time and beyond has been a “balancing act” and a series of responsibilities that he has to “juggle.” This includes the simple act of getting to campus in time for his classes after teaching all day and accomplishing the numerous readings and writing requirements in his coursework and now in his dissertation phase of his doctoral journey. Eddy finds a great deal of support from certain colleagues at work as well as from a small group of his fellow doctoral students. However, on some occasions, he has also felt that his colleagues and peers have not been very supportive. This all depends on the perspective that the person takes on doctoral education and whether or not they are able to empathize with Eddy’s experience.
Eddy has found his coursework to be very stimulating and this is where he made contact with several important “co-partners and colleagues” that have been an important support throughout his doctoral journey. Some of these “colleagues” are also persons that Eddy works with in the school district where he teaches. His “co-partners” have been fellow doctoral students who served as “venting partners” and even “did our projects together” with one of these co-partners. Together, these co-partners and colleagues have “helped me grow and have helped me kind of connect.” In one case, another one of his colleagues helped explore with him “if we really wanted the Ph.D.”

Eddy’s peers have helped him to understand some of the minutiae of scholarly work and have increased his socialization to the academy. In one case, a fellow doctoral student helped him understand scholarly writing for publication that he found to be “the choppiest writing that I have ever seen in my entire life” which helped him understand “why I don’t want to go to the R1 schools.” In another case, he was helped to find appropriate parking off-campus but within a reasonable distance to the building where he needed to attend courses.

Eddy has received much support from one of his co-advisors who is “like the shining arrow throughout this whole program.” This particular advisor has helped him to “navigate the political” side of being a doctoral candidate and was a professor to tell him “if you need anything call me at home.” This particular professor has been an advocate for Eddy’s progress and has encouraged him to keep pushing for progress when he was taking his comprehensive exams and now on his dissertation.
Eddy has found his dissertation process thus far to be very frustrating. Even though Eddy has a supportive peer and faculty network, they cannot truly help with the “waiting” and truly “alone” experience of “taking two steps forward and one step back” as he tries to make progress on his dissertation. His frustration lies in the attempts that he needs to make in “drafting” his dissertation and the continual changes that need to be made to his work.

Eddy plans on staying in the K-12 setting after completing his Ph.D. He considers himself a teacher first and a researcher second. He takes great pride in teaching as his profession and remarks “I never missed a day for work for any reason, especially because of Kent.” The position he hopes for when he graduates exists in the district where he is presently teaching. It is a hybrid position between teaching half a day and “curriculum facilitator/resource teacher” the other half of the day. Eddy will not consider a future in a research one university because his commitment is to the teaching and to research is secondary. He eventually hopes to take a position in higher education in a small, private college where research is not the primary goal for a professor.

Jan

Jan is a doctoral candidate in the fourth year of her doctoral studies majoring in Special Education in the School 1 in the College. She is presently working on writing her dissertation and she hopes to graduate later within the calendar year. Jan is also employed as part-time faculty member at a branch campus of the large university in Northeast Ohio. Within the past month, Jan took a position as a long-term substitute in Special Education/autism in a high school near her new home in Minnesota. She has
experienced a great deal of frustration in working towards her doctorate in all phases of her doctoral program. She feels a great deal of “frustration, isolation, and alienation” in her doctoral studies that she had not experienced in her previous academic endeavors.

Jan describes her experience in doctoral studies as being “a bit of a minefield.” Jan feels in part because her formative educational experiences were in the United Kingdom that there is a lot of “ignorance of other cultures” and this causes her frustration. She also feels that there is a lot of “favoritism and bias” towards some students and against others. Early in her doctoral studies, she was able to have a teaching assistantship and her cooperating professor was amenable to allowing Jan to continue working full-time while she engaged in her assistantship work. She was approached to take the GA that she didn’t apply for and that was a condition of her acceptance. However, once that professor left the University, Jan was assigned to another professor who would not allow her to work and engage in the assistantship duties at the same time, even though (she later discovered that) another doctoral student in her same program of study was allowed to work (for the same professor) while engaging in assistantship work. As a result, she has found that “some people seem to be in a niche where they are presenting, they are publishing; their professors going along with them, that has never been part of my experience. I have always tended to have done things in isolation.”

Jan enjoyed the peer interactions she experienced within the construct of the doctoral student classroom. She even was able to engage in discussions outside the classroom via email and found in some cases that she was “able to email people and we have had a thread of comments” in regards to the discussion at hand. Also she felt
camaraderie was important when faced with difficult classroom environments and situations where her and her classmates felt “demoralized.” However, she never really engaged in much social interactions with her peers and feels that the distance she lives from campus as well as her isolation in a very small doctoral program have created a situation where she feels “alienation because of my discipline.”

The only real support Jan has received in her doctoral journey has come from her main advisor both in coursework, through her comprehensive exams as well as while working on the dissertation. The other members of her first committee have presented her with a number of challenges in drafting her comprehensive exam questions she was not prepared for; the whole process of this took her nearly a year to complete. Then when she had prepared her dissertation proposal, she met with great resistance in terms of securing a research site and also with getting the committee’s approval. She feels that all of these events have been a result of “procrastination” on the part of all involved, including herself. After much time had passed, she found that she needed to reform the committee and essentially start over in writing the proposal. Even now, she is not certain “whether the committee I have got, are going to let me use the data that I gathered.”

All and all, Jan believes, “I don’t really feel that I have had any support at all, positive support.” As a direct result of her experience, Jan believes “I think somebody has got to look at deciding whether is part of the doctoral program about autonomy, taking ownership of everything and navigating the path yourself, or is it a supported process and if so, how are we going to support students? I feel there should be some kind of online scaffolding system that goes with you right through.”
Jan aspires to a future as a faculty member somewhere where she can “be directly involved in helping set up teaching programs because I think there is a lot wrong with the way we train our teachers over here [America].” However, she will soon be permanently relocating to Minnesota to be with her husband who now has employment there and had previously moved there. She does fear she will experience difficulty in securing a faculty position because much of her K-12 teaching experience is in “an entirely different system [United Kingdom] so that is not quite what we are looking for.” Even though she does believe she can “offer a different lens” on the way teacher education is practiced, she is not sure if this will be sufficient to secure a University professorship. However, she does “love being in the classroom” and would not be averse to returning to K-12 special education.

Olivia

Olivia is in the fifth year and dissertation phase of her doctoral studies in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in math education. She is also an instructor of mathematics at one of the branch campuses of the large university in Northeast Ohio. She teaches five classes a semester at the branch campus so has always been in pursuit of her Ph.D. as a part-time endeavor. However, she has been able to complete her courses and begin her dissertation without a graduate assistantship because as an instructor at the branch campus, she is able to take her courses for free. After Olivia completed her master’s degree she felt like she was still not in a place to meet the educational needs of her students. This drew her to the large university in Northeast Ohio because she still had
a deep desire to work harder to really address the multiple needs of all students in her classroom.

Olivia felt that her masters program was not sufficiently intellectually stimulating in terms of educating her on how best to address the needs of her students. She believes that her masters program “didn’t seem to open any doorways for me, just sort of kept things closed.” When she came to the large university in Northeast Ohio, Olivia had her eyes opened by some of her professors in terms of how to begin addressing the needs of her students and she felt like “I have a door opening.”

Olivia has found support in her doctoral academic journey from several people. She finds great support from her colleagues at the branch campus where she teaches, from her faculty advisor and committee members and from another doctoral student she refers to as her “dissertation buddy.”

Olivia’s support group at the branch campus has really pushed her to present at conferences as well as working on grant projects. This socialization process has been critical for Olivia because she really feels this is the work that will be so important in her future in the professorship. This group gives her the nudge to send out her work and to receive feedback from others. She does not feel that she has received similar support from her committee and advisors on the Kent campus but she also recognizes that this was her choice. She already had the socialization support from her colleagues at the branch campus so she did not seek out this support from her committee and advisors on the main campus.
Olivia’s doctoral committee and advisors have been a great support for her in her doctoral studies. From her first few classes until her present dissertation work, she has found great support in terms of exploring her own questions about math education from faculty that they have allowed her to “have that time and space to work through that were excellent.” In her opinion, her doctoral experience has been “just amazing, eye opening, enlightening and wonderful and exciting.” However, she does not consider the socialization that she has from the faculty on main campus to have been as critical for her as the socialization she has received from her colleagues at the branch campus. She hasn’t felt “like they have pushed or invited me, or asked me to be a part of those things for them.” Instead, she feels that she has gotten a lot more of her socialization from her colleagues at the branch campus as well as her “dissertation buddy.” She feels like she could have “interjected myself into their research” but that it was not necessary because of the guidance she was already receiving from her colleagues in the workplace as well as her “dissertation buddy”.

The interaction that Olivia has had with her “dissertation buddy” has been one of the most important supports she has had in the process. She met her “dissertation buddy” while she was in coursework and they have been “helping each other along the way,” because they share similar interests in terms of math education. Olivia’s peer is interested in math education for pre-school age children whereas Olivia is interested in math education at the high school or college level. However, their conversations have been easy because there is a lot of overlap in some of the themes of math education. While Olivia was writing her dissertation proposal, she was able to meet with her peer
“about once a month” and was able to receive feedback on the different chapters and at this point, Olivia refers to this peer as “a good friend.” A critical part of the success of this relationship from Olivia’s perspective is that “she and I walk through questions in the same way and we are interested in enhancing the classroom experience.”

Olivia sees her future work in teaching pre-service teachers math and math education methods. However, she really enjoys just teaching math and hopes to continue that work as well. She does envision herself in a tenure-track professorship and hopes to remain at the branch campus of the large university in Northeast Ohio. She feels this way because there are two other professors with her at the branch campus who “are really high energy, excitable and very supportive. The three of us work extremely well together and . . . is such a nice team.” In some ways, she fears that she will not be able to find this collegial interaction at another institution and that is why she hopes to continue at the branch campus even after completing her Ph.D.

**Amy**

Amy is in her fifth year of her doctoral program in Curriculum and Instruction in School 2 in the College. She is working on collecting her data for her dissertation. She estimates that she will graduate before the end of the calendar year. Amy completed the coursework phase of her doctoral studies as a full-time student but is presently working on her dissertation as a part-time student as she works as an adjunct professor at a branch campus of the large university in Northeast Ohio. She feels like she has gained a lot of self-confidence as a result of her doctoral student journey and that she is “building inner strength” that will serve her well in the future.
Amy feels her doctoral studies have left her with feelings of being “overwhelmed, frustrated, despair, and depression.” She does admit to moments of euphoria where she felt “really smart” and that she was “getting it.” However, she feels that on many levels, she just did not have appropriate faculty guidance even when she was a full-time student with a graduate assistantship. She even laments that in some cases professors did not give her input on her writing and in one extreme case, she spent “two months to write this paper and never got any response.” In many ways, she is critical of the role of the department to facilitate doctoral education and to encourage the professional development of doctoral students.

Amy considers the most important support that she has received in her doctoral program to come from personal friends. Amy does recognize that she has and most likely always will suffer from depression. She knows that she needs to lean on her lifelong friends for the support that she has not found in her doctoral program. She admits that she has three very long-term personal friends that she goes to when she needs emotional support.

Amy has experienced positive interactions with two doctoral students within the college. One of her peers is also a doctoral candidate having successfully defended her dissertation in recent days and her other peer is also a doctoral candidate. Amy’s doctoral candidate friend was a major support for her in terms of explaining the methodology process for her dissertation. This relationship allowed her to interact with another student in a collegial way that made her feel like “I’m still in the program.” The other doctoral candidate has actually benefited from the mentorship that Amy has provided. Her peer
Amy believes she will spend much time after completing her dissertation in writing articles for publication to build her curriculum vitae. She will likely continue to engage in adjunct faculty teaching as she works to make herself a viable candidate for the professorial workforce. She is an educational generalist and has recently found that there are few jobs for such a candidate and she is concerned about her options. She feels as a result of doctoral studies that she has built her pedagogical skills and that she will be more equipped to work with her own students in an effort to build their academic knowledge. However, she does note that this work will be done “out of sheer anger” and a concern that she will provide better guidance for her future students.
Doris

Doris is in the sixth year of her doctoral studies; her major is instructional technology within School 1 of the College. She holds a full-time position as an Assistant District Office Supervisor for the Department of Health in a neighboring city, a job that requires 40-50 hours of work each week. Doris is in the dissertation phase of her doctoral studies and has consistently worked on her doctorate as a part-time venture. She has always seen her experience at the large university in Northeast Ohio as a place for “personal growth, some inner peace, happiness and . . . relaxation . . . where my sunshine is.”

Doris also receives satisfaction from her job, much as she does from her doctoral student experience. But in recent days she has experienced friction between the two worlds and in some ways feels “if I could, I’d quit [the job] in a minute.” She stays at her job because it is “very purpose-driven job” and also because she needs the financial stability as well as health care benefits that come with the position. Within the last year and a half, Doris got a new boss at her job that is not as understanding of the commitment that she needs to make towards completing her dissertation.

Doris describes her part-time doctoral student experience as being “like a lone ranger.” Her previous graduate student experiences had been full-time undertakings so when she came to the large university in Northeast Ohio as a part-timer she felt very disconnected from the other doctoral students. She feels like many graduate students are good about trying to create a “collegial and welcoming” environment and even notes “it seems like the graduate students are more apt to try and promote that than faculty here.”
She considers these support networks very important and realizes that many students need to “stick together” to persist and complete their doctoral studies.

Doris learned within the last year that a faculty member in her program was putting together a small group of doctoral students to meet once a month “just to go over their progress and stuff like that.” She wanted to join the group, even though the faculty member was not her advisor because she thought “it would have been good to have the student interaction.” When she emailed the faculty member, she was surprised to find that the faculty member was concerned that she was trying to leave her advisor, which she was not. In the end, Doris decided not to join the group because she was concerned that she “would be offending my advisor.” She did not want to do this. However, she still considers the networking that happens between students during doctoral study to be one of the most important things that a student should leave doctoral education having secured. Doris likens this network as similar to what develops between medical students while in their residency and believes that this is crucial for student success. Furthermore, she believes that the impetus for creating such peer groups in doctoral study should come from faculty and be an ongoing support network to promote doctoral student progress.

One of Doris’s biggest hurdles is feeling “very badly about not being farther along than I am right now.” She is somewhat disappointed that she has not been able to get her dissertation proposal and study underway in a more timely fashion. One of her problems is not being able to better focus and narrow her topic for study. Furthermore, the lack of support that she feels she is getting in her work environment could be
contributing to the lack of progress. She does not believe that her work schedule will be reduced any time soon and believes that this will further slow her progress.

Doris found some of the interactions that took place between her peers in her doctoral coursework in an online course as “bullying” type activity. It seemed like one of the students was placing posts on the course page that were demeaning to certain individuals, not to her personally, but to her classmates. Generally though, Doris has experienced positive peer interactions within her courses and with collaborative groups. However, she would not consider any of these interactions as facilitating her experiences or struggles.

Doris had one stressful situation where she was put in between two professors and had to complete an independent study with her advisor instead of the course she was signed up for. The course professor stated to Doris “why are you here? You just won’t fit” and insisted that her advisor take her under his study instead. As a result, she agreed to a contract with her advisor and completed the work. At the end of the semester, her advisor insisted that she had not completed the work contracted to. She did pass the independent study but feels this to have been her most negative experience in her doctoral program.

Doris lives with her elderly father and has a certain level of responsibility to him and his care. Although he is not seriously ill, he does need taken to doctors appointments and needs help that she must provide. She cannot ignore this responsibility and realizes that this is something that she needs to deal with. Doris’s father, however, is somewhat
supportive of her doctoral education but, in many ways, he does not see the value of all
the work she is doing to complete the journey.

Doris hopes someday to teach courses in a distance learning environment. She
wants to “facilitate student learning for those that maybe can’t get to campus all the
time.” She is especially interested in looking at distance learning opportunities for
healthcare professionals that could take place online and fulfill requirements for
professional development (CEUs). She envisions her work in online environments as
“part of the brave new world when it comes to university learning and teaching.”

Kelly

Kelly is in the sixth year of her doctoral studies and she is currently working on
her dissertation in counseling in School 1 of the College. She is also a full-time
professional counselor at a hospital in a nearby city. Kelly is “a mom and wife first, and I
work, and then school is fourth on the list.” Kelly has always worked full-time as a
counselor throughout her doctoral studies. She hopes her dissertation will be directly
related to her work and give her credentials that will allow her to take on a counselor
supervisor position as well as to allow others to see “a black female with a Doctorate
degree, is very rare, and to actually do it is like, wow, I did that. I think other people will
see that and recognize it.”

Kelly’s decision to begin her doctorate “was very big for me to even decide to go
back to school in the first place.” She had considered either law school or counseling and
ultimately settled on counseling not only because she enjoys her profession but also
because she had a great fear of taking the MCAT to get into law school. She was also
very intimidated by taking the GRE as well as the admissions interview process because she was concerned about whether or not she “can do this kind of thing, which I wasn’t sure if I could do it at the time.”

Kelly really enjoyed the coursework phase of her doctoral studies. She found great comfort in going to classes and even believes “I could go to class all day.” She appreciated in her Residency class when doctoral candidates explained the process of taking comprehensive exams and the dissertation process. However, she still felt unprepared for her comprehensive exams and even procrastinated taking the test for quite some time. Kelly gave birth to her son between coursework and comprehensive exams and believes she used that as an excuse as to why it took her so long to complete the exams. Also, Kelly struggled with the theory behind her practice so comprehensive exams were “one of the hardest tests of my academic career.” When she did complete her comprehensive exams, she really believed she “knows what I’m talking about.”

Kelly found that she was “the only black person for most all of my classes.” Even at professional conferences Kelly attends, she finds she is “usually the only black person there.” She found this somewhat uncomfortable in her coursework because it seemed like she was often asked her opinion on “race and gender” and “multicultural counseling.” In many ways, she believes this line of questioning to be completely “inappropriate and unacceptable”, however, she also realizes that if she does not speak up for African Americans, she does not know who will. This motivates Kelly in many ways to complete her doctorate. She feels that she can possibly motivate other young black
women to pursue high levels of academic achievement. She really believes “other people will see that and recognize it.”

Kelly is a very religious person and believes that “God has a purpose for my life and I just have to tap into it. You know be prayerful and faithful and focus on whatever it is that He wants me to do.” She was brought up in a Baptist church and was very active in her faith community as a child. As a result, she feels “God is in my life and I couldn’t be where I am today without it. So that is what keeps me going.” She is not presently active in a faith community because she does not want her son to be in “a random daycare” during Sunday services but she still participates in worship through watching television evangelists and through reading her bible and devotional texts and listening to inspirational music.

Kelly finds the support she receives from her husband and family to be critical in her doctoral journey. Her husband and mother have provided a great source of support in terms of encouraging her to continue working on her doctoral studies. Kelly and her husband “do [the household work] together most of the time.” While Kelly was studying for her comprehensive exams, she was able to hand the baby off to him when he would come home from work. She believes “he is there and he totally understands. I couldn’t ask for a better mate.”

Kelly did not really interact a lot with other doctoral students in her process. She feels limited because she was always part-time and basically went to campus for classes and then went home. She did experience an informal cohort as part of her coursework and had contact with “these same five folks” through classes but feels she “did not
develop those social relationships really. I’m okay with it.” She has had opportunity to communicate with some of her peers who have now graduated using an online professional network. This does allow her to ask advice from the other side and “they are willing to give it.”

Kelly feels she did not “have a lot of contact with Professors.” She believes because she wasn’t “a fellow or a grad assistant, I didn’t have like, that ready contact right there and feedback kind of stuff.” She believes she was not as connected as some of her fellow doctoral students and feels she may have missed out on some of that but she knew why she was pursuing her Ph.D. in order to be “more credible” as a counselor supervisor, not for the social interaction.

Kelly enjoys working with the company she is presently employed with and plans on “retiring from here.” When Kelly obtains her Ph.D. she would like to find a position with the company as a counselor supervisor. Kelly is not in “a huge rush to get it done” and will complete her doctorate at her own pace. She does look forward to the day when she will be called “Doctor” and relishes the opportunities she will have to “have found my career finally.” She anticipates “being in the field for as long as I can and actually doing counseling.”

Jennifer

Jennifer is a doctoral candidate in the seventh year of her doctoral program in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in early childhood math education in School 2 in the College. She is working on preparing her proposal for her dissertation and is hoping to defend her proposal within the next several months. Jennifer works as a
full-time non-tenure track faculty member in School 2 and she is also a part-time coordinator of the Children’s Program at the Child Development Center for the large university in Northeast Ohio. Jennifer enjoys her work as both a NTT faculty member and the ability she has to still work in a school with children she feels “it’s like the best of both worlds for me.”

Jennifer found a great deal of support early in her doctoral program when she took several of her first classes with a colleague she also works with. She found it was helpful to have “somebody I knew so that we could come back and talk about it or talk about assignments,” especially because Jennifer took some rather difficult courses early in her doctoral program. She felt this was a time of “spiraling confusion and clarity.” The support that this peer and colleague provided was essential for Jennifer because she describes herself as “a very shy, introverted person.” Although she enjoys being in the company of others, she does not feel she is the type of person who will initiate a relationship or conversation.

Even though Jennifer believes she is an “introverted person,” she had the great fortune to enjoy the support of a peer group from the outset of her doctoral student experience. She became associated with this group during her coursework as a result of “similar philosophies or interests and theories” and formed a “John Dewey group” where they “would read books and chapters by Dewey and meet and talk about it.” She found it helpful to have “another place to talk about different things” outside the normal classroom venue.
Jennifer developed a relationship with one particular peer in “some of the last classes that I took.” This peer eventually became Jennifer’s “dissertation buddy” and she has found a great deal of support from this one peer in particular. This peer helped her a lot with “the content” of the math courses they took together. As it worked out, Jennifer was able to help this peer with understanding “theory related to child development.” As the relationship developed with this peer, Jennifer relied on this peer’s input on her writing and thinking about her dissertation proposal. They would often meet every three weeks and talk about the piece that they were presently working on. These meetings continue to date and have evolved over time to be an opportunity for each of them to address “burning questions” and engage in “talking though ideas together.”

Jennifer feels this relationship with her peer is such an important source of support because they had to “stick to our guidelines” and produce the work that they said they would do for the next meeting. They even “threatened” each other, in a facetious fashion with a game of “truth or dare” if they did not come prepared to their peer debriefing meetings. Jennifer even says this peer “made me set a date to turn in my draft” to her committee. Jennifer believes that this relationship is not strictly intellectual but also has an emotional component. She even refers to this relationship as a friendship and that they rely on one another to hold to their meetings and to comply with “those deadlines that help you get stuff done.”

Jennifer realizes the rarity of this relationship. She doesn’t “know of anyone else who had the same relationship, or has, I should say. It’s not over.” She believes it is the result of a “bonding moment” they had early in their experience when they “went to this
conference” with their professor. She also notes that “we just do a lot of laughing together . . . I think we’re both really good listeners.” She feels that she has received “constructive feedback” from her peer and also feels that she has been able to give “helpful” and “interactive reading” of her work. Their meetings often times involve reading and commenting on the piece in question and this allows each of them to receive immediate feedback in a timely fashion.

When Jennifer completes her Ph.D., she would like to remain in her present position. She enjoys the opportunity to teach college students about early childhood education but she also enjoys “being part of the school and being around the age group that I teach about.” She has no ambition to pursue a tenure-track university teaching position but instead hopes to focus her work at the Child Development Center and to help the teacher-researchers in the school get their work published and made known to a greater academic audience. She hopes when she gets her Ph.D. to be able to “be more helpful here in terms of the research that goes on.”

Donald

Donald is in his eighth year of doctoral studies and has now successfully defended his dissertation and is graduating at the end of the semester. Donald’s major is in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in teaching studies in School 2 in the College. Donald is also a full-time high school language teacher in a public school district where he has taught for the past twenty-five years. Donald has struggled to balance work as a teacher and his doctoral studies and has worked consistently on his coursework and dissertation for eight years without a break; he has been enrolled
continuously for the past eight years. Donald feels that his teaching is really rewarding and feels that the work he does in that environment to be very important both financially and philosophically.

Donald has found tremendous support from his peers as he progresses through his doctoral studies. He remembers a “magical summer” early in his coursework where he was fully interacting with peers and engaging in an action research project on doctoral student socialization that he found to be a “wonderful thing . . . it was just fun.” Donald and his small group of peers undertook an action research project that allowed their small group to be just “cranking out stuff.” His group was able to generate enough data to present at regional and national conferences. He describes this time in his doctoral studies as “we were just reading constantly and getting together with people . . . it was just a wonderful time.”

Donald misses the interactions he had with his peers because his initial peer group from early in his doctoral studies have all moved on and are “all over the map” now that most of them have graduated. Donald “semi-regrets” the lack of networking he experienced during his doctoral studies and as a part-time student where he has always felt like a “second tier” student. He was never able to quit his full-time teaching position and even though he loves his job, since he has started his doctoral studies, he often feels limited in what he can do on campus because he has “this full time job around [his] neck.” Donald credits the Doctoral Forum group as giving him peer interaction that he needed, especially when he moved into the isolating dissertation phase of his doctoral studies.
Donald had a lot of difficulty in finding an appropriate topic to research for his dissertation. He struggled to get a proposal together and floundered for some time between his comprehensive exams working on studies that “just kind of fell apart.” At the same time, he was given a “terrible teaching assignment that year” which compounded his difficulty in focusing his thoughts into a workable dissertation. When he finally did find an appropriate question to research, he found that “everything just took off from there.” He was able to spend a summer reading the appropriate literature and finally settle on methodology appropriate for his dissertation study.

Donald has found a great deal of support in the progress of his doctoral studies from his wife and daughter. Donald’s eight years in his doctoral studies fell concurrently with his daughter’s high school and college education. He spent a lot of time nurturing his daughter during this time and she has even decided to follow in her father’s footsteps and is in the midst of her first year of teaching as Donald defends his dissertation and graduates with his Ph.D. Donald’s wife has always provided him with his “main support.” She is even in the process of “getting the house fixed up so that we can get it on the market if we need to get out of there.” She has also provided him with support in terms of encouraging him to be constantly moving forward on his dissertation but at the same time, she always gave him breathing room and space for thought when he most needed it. Donald has always been cognizant of the strain that this academic pursuit has placed on his family and always made explicit effort not to ignore his family or to become so alienated that they would not recognize him.
Donald is going to continue teaching at the high school he has been employed at for twenty-five years until he can take his pension and retire, most likely within the next five years. In the meantime, he has been working at securing a part-time teaching position at a branch campus of the large university in Northeast Ohio where he can be engaged in a teacher education program that is being developed. Donald is not highly invested in beginning his career over with a tenure-track teaching position; he considers “a suitable non-tenure track job would be okay . . . just staying off the radar and doing what I want to do.” Donald hopes that he can “make new friends at the next place I am teaching” and to possibly engage in collaborative research and writing with his future peers. He does hope “after the dust settles” from his final dissertation work to “re-contact a number of people” from his coursework because he would like to see how things work out for his peers and reconnect with them as he moves into his future in the academy.
APPENDIX I

VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS CREATED BY PARTICIPANTS
Appendix I

Visual Representations Created by Participants

Kim’s Visual Representation
At first, you think starting a Ph.D. is an insurmountable task... but... if you're lucky, you meet people who've been there before.
Elmer’s Visual Representation
Tina’s Visual Representation

+ KENT STATE

(STAMINA) (WHITE HALL) (HOMEWORK)

(PARKIN LOT SHARKS) (GA POSITION)

(POLITICS) (NEW FRIENDS)

(PLAYING THE GAME) (SCHEDULING)

+ TEACHING/GRADING/COUNSELING/PLANNING

+ BEADY, WALLY, HARLEY (FAMILY)

+ FRIENDS -

+ MENTAL HEALTH: CHALLENGE

+ EXERCISE

- KENT STATE PH.D. - DR. BROWN
Jo Ann’s Visual Representation
Joey’s Visual Representation
Julia’s Visual Representation
Matthew's Visual Representation
Interview #1 Beginning activity:

Take a few moments to think about your personal journey as an education doctoral student or candidate, on your way towards completing your Ph.D. You may want to capture this visually or with words, whichever is helpful for you.

Frustrating
Fulfilling
Hopeless
Helpless
Grand Achievement
Greatest Achievement of my life
Can I do it?
Will I do it?
Tired—very tired

Difficult focusing at times
Accepting less of what I can do
Goal: to teach, do research and most importantly have my girls go to school for free
Phyllis' Visual Representation
Abby’s Visual Representation
Eddy’s Visual Representation
Jan’s Visual Representation
Olivia’s Visual Representation
Amy’s Visual Representation

I shall succeed

It is what it is,
Doris' Visual Representation

[Hand-drawn image with text]

- Growth
- Peace
- Happiness
- Restoration
- I hope you dance...
- Runnin' on empty
- Runnin' wild...
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Purpose
- Soul

Legend:
- KSU
- In Akron
- My friend
Kelly’s Visual Representation
Jennifer’s Visual Representation
Donald’s Visual Representation (Part 1)
Donald’s Visual Representation (Part 2)
APPENDIX J

PART-TIME DOCTORAL STUDENT PEER DEBRIEFING
Appendix J
Part-Time Doctoral Student Peer Debriefing

As a form of peer review, I was asked to read Chapters 4 and 5 of Ms. Bircher’s dissertation and to respond in terms of the accuracy of how my own experiences could be reflected within the data set. It was particularly uncanny at times to read the chapters as the descriptions provided felt like my own story as a part-time student at KSU.

There were four areas that were primarily reflective of my own experiences and in the next few paragraphs I will briefly provide an example of how those themes have been reflected within my own journey. These four areas are lack of self-efficacy, undermining doctoral student peers, full-time doctoral student privilege, and peer-networks.

As Lisa accurately describes, there are many part-time doctoral students that believe that full-time doctoral students are more productive and better socialized to the academy than part-time students. While completing my course work, there were many instances where I was compared to a “full-time” doctoral student, with a remark that indicated I wasn’t up to par with my classmates in terms of socialization and quality of work, even though during an average semester I took two or three courses, received A’s in all of my classes and assignments, as well as taught a full-schedule in a demanding school district about 45 minutes away from the university. I still remember the sting that I felt when one of my advisors told me that the reason I was having trouble completing my proposal was because I simply just didn’t have the experiences, such as publishing, that other full-time students in the program had.
While it was isolating to feel this way, at the same time, if it was not for my supportive peers, I would still be at the comprehensive exam stage. This is where peer-networks are extremely important. I too had experiences of meeting before classes to read other students’ papers and sending e-mails to other students during class about how Professor Y was out-of-line. I also experienced calling other doc students at all hours of the day to get help with writing. To illustrate the strength of my own peer group, I will share a particular story from my second semester as a doc student. I remember leaving class and the roads were completely iced over. As we are all about to leave the parking lots, my cell phone started going off. As a group, my peers and I decided to all take the same roads home to make sure that we all got there safely, although none of us lived near each other. Although it was a small service to perform due to the weather, it made us all closer, such that we felt we could rely on one another. The next day the university was closed. Our own schools were closed as well, and I can still remember how we met that next day to go over our papers, knowing that we could support each other on the drive home again if necessary.

Another one of Lisa’s themes that was also was particularly reminiscent of my experiences is related to the category of “undermining doctoral student peers.” Although I can never say that I felt undermined by my peers—there were times where I felt that I was not as good as they were—I do realize now that perhaps I was one of those people who was doing the undermining. I was often over-prepared for class, could connect readings to other readings, was told during an open discussion by a professor that I was “too well-read,” and was considered the “brain of my peer-group.” Although these are
probably good qualities to have as a student, they aren’t necessarily the best for building relationships with peers. I remember one particular instance where a peer, similar to one of Lisa’s participants, asked me not to ask questions during her presentation as I would probably connect my own knowledge to another reading with which she was not familiar. Although I felt that this was limiting to my own learning, I can see how others might have viewed this negatively.

The last theme that was particularly reflective of my own experiences was related to self-efficacy. To a certain extent, I think that every person experiences self-efficacy issues during their doctoral course work, but that it can be magnified, and almost debilitating, at different times during the experience. I remember during Residency II, my last course as a doc student, being asked the question by a peer—do you think you’ll finish? The only answer that I could muster was “of course I’ll finish,” because her intent was to remind me that I was the “brain” and that I couldn’t possibly be the 1 out of the 2 that don’t finish post-comps. But as I think of that moment, I know that I wasn’t fully convinced then that I would finish. The same is true even now as I struggle to write maybe my third or fourth or maybe fifth version of my dissertation. There still seems to be no end in sight, perhaps due to a lack of guidance and support, and I for one am at a crossroads saying that I might just not be cut out for this.
APPENDIX K

FULL-TIME DOCTORAL STUDENT PEER DEBRIEFING
Appendix K

Full-time Doctoral Student Peer Debriefing

Please respond in terms of whether and to what extent you see your own experiences accurately reflected in these chapters.

As I read chapters four and five, I found myself identifying with many of the benefits and challenges to being a doctoral student. Indeed, on many occasions I read sentences that started with the phrase, “part-time students . . .” and felt that they also strongly related to my experience as a full-time of a doctoral student. Overall, as I read I recognized that many of the issues mentioned related to my experiences and to situations I have witnessed with both full-time and part-time colleagues. The question that remained for me is whether these experiences are heightened for part-time students and if so in what ways and for what reasons. In the following paragraphs I take the themes of collegiality and isolation (and their sub-themes) identified in the data analysis and briefly discuss whether I have experienced these issues and if so to what extent.

Theme 1: Collegiality

Supportive doctoral student peers.

This was a theme that I very much identified with. During my first semester I made contact with five or six doctoral students who were all in my first class and I have kept extremely close contact with them ever since. The more experienced doctoral students in our mini cohort helped guide and socialize us to many of the workings of the department and College etc., while the newer members were able to support each other as we
transitioned to doctoral study. Over the years each new class I take adds new characters to this group of peers that I rely on for support and mentorship and has even expanded so that I informally mentor some of the newer students. As a full-time Graduate Assistant I have had the additional benefit of developing a kind of 'mini-cohort' with my GA peers, and I wonder if my class colleagues were not GAs if we would have kept in such close contact and provided support for each other. However, the GAs that I am closest with and who support me the most are the ones who I originally connected with in class. What I suspect is that the GA office where we work gives us the time and opportunity to continue to develop these supportive relationships without us having to find additional times in our busy schedule to talk to each other.

**Small, professor-led peer groups.**

I have not experienced one of these professor-led peer groups but I often talk to colleagues about trying to get small groups of doctoral students together so we can exchange ideas and support each other. I think a professor-led group would work well because of the additional mentorship aspect and the facilitation to keep students on topic during sessions.

**One-on-one peer mentorship.**

One of the peers from the mini-cohort I mentioned earlier has become a long-standing support and critical friends throughout my three years of doctoral study. We had the opportunity to take multiple classes together and began collaborating on work in those classes. As our schedules began to diversify we kept in touch and use each other as
sounding boards and support. We each have different, specific knowledge of the working of the College and utilize each other’s knowledge. Currently we are collaborating on approximately three projects and I feel that I would not be undertaking these projects if I was working alone, as you say in your analysis. The relationship really was spontaneous in that we had multiple classes together, were talking about ideas one day, and then began our first academic collaboration. The other student is also full-time and a GA, so once again I don’t know if this has made it easier for us to continue collaborating. I do know that with our hectic schedules we find it difficult to find time to work on projects and have to be extremely disciplined about making time to see each other—talking in the GA office just isn’t sufficient. We meet and Skype outside of the office so we can concentrate on our projects.

**Peer networks**

I see peer networks as being related to the supportive peers I mentioned earlier. However, if I consider a peer network to be a "reference' group as mentioned in the analysis then I would say I mostly rely on my GA colleagues because they are more often available and have a wider span of knowledge and experience that I can utilize.

**Anticipatory socialization**

When I started doctoral study I had no idea what to expect in terms of what was required of me, workload, or the workings of the department. I would completely agree with the idea that the peer networks I made in those first few days of doctoral study became pivotal in my development as a doctoral student and then an emerging scholar. As I said
earlier, I was lucky to connect with new students like myself and was comforted by the fact that they were as unsure and unsocialized to the College as I was, and I was also able to connect with more experiences students further along in their coursework who offered knowledge of the College and reassurance about the doctoral process in general. On occasion talking to these more experienced peers was very intimidating - would I ever reach their level of knowledge and scholarly maturity I wondered - but they also provided a great many lessons about being a doctoral student.

**Socialization to the role of scholar**

I very much related to some of the participants' experiences about socialization to scholar. Some of the participants in the study note that they have no publications on their curriculum vitae. As I complete my final year of coursework I have no publications on my curriculum vitae. I do not feel that this has to do with being part-time or full-time, but is very much to do with how proactive students are about doing out of class work. As a full-time student and a full-time GA I find it extremely difficult to find time to work on publications and conferences on top of my GA work and classwork. I really do believe that it is up to the motivation of the individual as to what kinds and how many scholarly activities they undertake. From day one professors have told me, both in and out of class that every single piece of work we do in class should relate to our line of inquiry and could be the basis for a publication. Some students take this advice to heart and begin publishing early on and others, like me, procrastinate or find it difficult to balance the responsibilities of working and class work with additional scholarly activities.
Workplace colleague and personal friends

My workplace is the GA office and my colleagues are GAs. *We come from all walks of life and have differing experiences prior to doctoral study* (emphasis added). I gain a great deal of support and advice from my doctoral colleagues. We often get the chance to informally discuss doctoral studies, our experiences as students. *I spend more time in the workplace than any other and this is where much of my mentorship has taken place* (emphasis added). As I have moved through the program I now also see myself taking on a mentoring role with newer doctoral students in the office. On many occasions I have been asked questions as I have walked past a colleague—I do believe that the convenience of having workplace colleagues to hand makes mentorship and advice much more accessible.

In terms of personal friends, I would say they have little to do with my doctoral experience. I rarely, if ever, talk to my personal friends about doctoral study. They are not doctoral students and many people who have never experienced doctoral study cannot understand the experience. Instead I use my personal friends as a different kind of support; they are a way for me to gain space away from my studies and to interact with a world outside of doctoral study. In this way personal friends have their place in supporting me through doctoral study, but if I have friends who have not been through PhDs I do not generally talk to them about my school life.

I believe that my peer interactions in the classroom and in the GA office have been the fundamental socialization experience of my doctoral career. The informal lessons
learned from colleagues and experiences with peers have had the most impact on my development as a scholar. There is no one in the world who can understand what a doctoral student is going through, except another doctoral student. Faculty can and often do strive to understand but they are removed from the day-to-day life and experiences of doctoral study by the nature of the institution and cannot support doctoral students in the same way peers can. Faculty provides their own crucial form of mentorship and assistance, and peers have provided another, just as valuable, mentorship to me.

**Isolation: Unsupportive doctoral student peers**

I have definitely experienced the unsupportive doctoral student. They are few and far between and often do not even know they're doing it. Sometimes I feel that some doctoral students are more competitive than others and when this occurs, an off-the-cuff remark or a somewhat aggressive question during a presentation can seem very unsupportive. *As a full-time student I do not believe there is a two-tier system between full-time and part-time doctoral students* (emphasis added). My personal belief is that part-time students more often have lives and families that must make the task of doctoral study even more difficult than I find it, and I respect them for their perseverance. I generally feel bad for part-time students because I know that they miss out on many of the informal conversations, mentoring, and socialization experiences that occur in the GA office, but other than that I do not distinguish them from my other doctoral colleagues.
Negotiating scholarly identity

As a full-time student I often struggle with negotiating a scholarly identity. A student is very different from a scholar in that students are more generally dependent learners and consumers of knowledge while scholars are supposed to be independent and generators of knowledge. I usually feel that I have not yet successfully developed a scholarly identity and I often worry that I never will. I have been a student for almost 30 years so it is extremely hard to break the pattern of consuming knowledge and try to develop into a scholar, or an expert in my field. *I also have workplace experiences in university as support staff, so I have a quite developed identity as a student advisor and administrative assistant. It becomes hard sometimes to leave that identity behind while I strive to become a researcher and academic* (emphasis added). I have always supported academics before, I have never been one. I feel like each semester I move closer to developing a scholarly identity, it isn’t an easy journey, but I believe the journey is what is helping me re-adjust my identity and begin to see myself as a scholar. Class work, GA work, and all the kinds of peer interaction I mentioned previously all help me to negotiate my scholarly identity, but it is definitely not an easy or worry-free process.

Lack of time

As I mentioned previously, I have yet to publish an article and I do put this down to lack of time. While my GA work may officially only be 20 hours per week on many occasions I work on GA work for more time than that, and I am often given short-periods with which to complete work for my advisors - that's simply the nature of my “job.” With class work on top of this, time is the one thing I would like more of. Every day I
have a list of tasks I intend to do that never get completed. I am currently trying to read articles related to my own area of interest, but my own work is last on my list and more often than not gets discarded. My “work” as a GA comes first, then my class work, and then there really is no time for much else. I know that a scholar must make time for the additional work, and I also know that some students, both full-time and part-time, manage to make the time. I really do think that every single doctoral student suffers from a lack of time, we each have a myriad of responsibilities, but it is up to the individual to make time, or readjust priorities in order to find time for additional scholarly work (emphasis added), and that is what I am striving for this semester.

I was intrigued by the notion in this chapter that full-time doctoral students often socialize after class. In my experience this is not the case. I have only gone out after class with colleagues on two occasions over the last three years, and these were end of semester celebrations (emphasis added). At the end of class I have to rush home to sleep, look after the house, or continue with homework; my colleagues all seem to be rushing off to do the same thing. I don’t hear of many doctoral students socializing outside of class because none of us has the time - full or part time students (emphasis added).

Lack of self-efficacy

If it hasn’t been implicit in my previous responses then I should say explicitly that I have often lacked self-efficacy and wondered if I was cut-out for doctoral study and if I could succeed (emphasis added). Talking to colleagues I believe that we have ALL experienced a lack of self-efficacy at some point, and I personally go through period
where I think I might not make it. Often I am talking to a peer colleague and friend and I feel like I will never have the same level of knowledge of theories and literature as they will. I can see so many of my peers as scholars who will get great jobs, but I spend many nights wondering if the same could be said for me. I do not feel like a scholar, I do not feel like I know as much as I should, or as much as some others (emphasis added).

Perhaps this is just part of my personal character, but I do believe that it's also part of the doctoral experience. *We all experience self-doubt occasionally and question our abilities* (emphasis added).

**Lack of orientation to the university**

As an international student I felt very well orientated to the university. However, there was no College orientation as such and I had to figure out for myself how to register for classes and fulfill the administrative requirements of the School I was enrolled in. I was lucky in that as a GA I had a GA orientation (a very short social sessions) where I was able to make contacts who I could ask for help, but overall I think an orientation to the different schools, departments and workings of the college would have helped to stave off a lot of fear and anxiety.

As I mentioned at the start, I have been a full-time doctoral student and graduate assistant for three years. Overall, I would say I have experienced both the positive and negative aspects of doctoral student life and socialization, as identified in the data analysis section. I believe that peer mentorship has been crucial for making me the developed doctoral student I am, and I strive to mentor my colleagues in and out of class as best I can simply
by being there for discussion, questions, and support whenever needed. *The main benefit of being a full-time student and GA that I see is that I have easy access to my colleagues, although those I am closest to and rely on the most are those I initially developed relationships with in class* (emphasis added). It is the informal discussions that I often find most invaluable in the GA office. In terms of scholarly activity and making time outside of class for extra work, I do not feel that I have any additional benefits working as a GA; time is tight for us all and while we may not have a full-time job outside of the university a GA is a stressful and time consuming job like any other. As a full-time doctoral student I feel that it is my own responsibility to go and seek out research and publication activities with faculty and I do this via email most of the time. *I honestly don’t see that my being a full-time student provides any benefit when it comes to seeking out scholarly opportunities* (emphasis added).
APPENDIX L

EPILOGUE
Appendix L

Epilogue

As I conducted this research, I attempted to practice reflexivity and make constant attempts to minimize the affect of my biases and assumptions about part-time doctoral students. However, I did not really understand the level of these biases and assumptions until the final reaches of this research effort. The exercise that elucidated these assumptions and biases was the final step of this research where I engaged in peer debriefing in which I employed one full-time doctoral student and one part-time doctoral student to read and respond to Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation (see Appendices J and K). This work was critical because it allowed me to recognize assumptions I held about experiences I believed to be germane to part-time doctoral students. The full-time doctoral student peer review effort was most helpful because it allowed me to recognize three major assumptions I held; perceptions that may not be reality. These assumptions include the level of socializing I believed full-time doctoral students enjoyed, as well as the notion of the “second-tier” part-time doctoral student, and the lack of self-efficacy experienced by all doctoral students.

The major assumption I held in regards to the socializing full-time doctoral students engage in outside the classroom is significant. As a part-time student, I always believed (as do my part-time doctoral student peers) I was missing out on time spent in social settings outside the classroom. Indeed, the only socializing that may actually be taking place among full-time doctoral students outside the classroom may be the interactions in the GA office. Many part-time doctoral students believe there is a social
friendship that takes place outside of the classroom; it is believed there are times spent in restaurants, bars, or other places of recreation among full-time doctoral students. My full-time peer debriefer made it clear that these situations may be few and far between, in reality, I may have experienced more social interactions in places of recreation with my fellow doctoral student peers than the full-time doctoral student experienced.

A second major assumption I held prior to peer debriefing is the notion that part-time doctoral students are “second-tier” doctoral students. The idea that part-time doctoral students are inferior to their full-time counterparts now seems to me a legend that has become integrated into the very fabric of the academic culture. I do recognize as discussed above that one of the key experiences part-time doctoral students miss out on is the ready contact they enjoy with peers on campus (e.g., in the GA office). However, full-time students do not recognize part-time students as “second-tier” and only recognize them as different because they do not participate in the informal conversations, mentoring and social interactions on campus; indeed, as indicated by my full-time doctoral student peer debriefer, full-time students “feel bad for part-time students” because they miss out on these opportunities. Furthermore, full-time students do not believe they are privy to increased opportunities for research, presentation and publication activities because these are generally conducted as work outside, as well as above and beyond the typical GA assigned work. Full-time students like part-time students must take the initiative to engage in scholarly work.

A major assumption that I became cognizant of during peer debriefing with my full-time and part-time peers was the lack of self-efficacy germane to all doctoral
students. Due to my immersion in the literature and my own personal experience as a part-time doctoral student, I often believed that part-time doctoral students experienced a lack of self-efficacy above and beyond what was experienced by full-time doctoral students. Perhaps this was due to increased socializing I had with part-time doctoral students as I self-selected them as my closest peers throughout my doctoral student journey? Perhaps this was due to the assumption I perceived as a divide between full-time and part-time doctoral students as an artifact of the “second-tier” assumption I held of the part-time doctoral student experience? Regardless of the reason why I believed that full-time doctoral students experienced an increased self-efficacy than part-time doctoral students, I now know this is not the case in reality. Both peer debriefers, full-time and part-time reflected on their respective lack of self-efficacy that sounds a lot like my own experience as a doctoral student. In retrospect, I think this belief about the lack of self-efficacy for part-time students is the same as that experienced by full-time doctoral students, albeit heightened for part-time doctoral students due to their lack of proximity to campus. This is a topic that many doctoral students may be reluctant to discuss because for these students who have experienced academic success in all prior educational experiences (i.e., bachelors and masters programs), it may be difficult to admit these feelings. Indeed, since full-time doctoral students study and work (usually as graduate or teaching assistants) at the university, their self-efficacy may in many ways be less than a part-time student who at least enjoys the outlet of a job or career separate from the university. In my own experience and in the experience of my part-time peer debriefer (personal communication, February 2012) we have often found
our work to provide satisfaction when doctoral studies provide stress/challenge and vice versa. In many ways, our part-time doctoral student status provided us with privilege not enjoyed by full-time students, both as outlet to stress and inducer of stress.

In conclusion, it seems that part-time and full-time doctoral students may have experiences that are not so different from one another. In the challenge to complete a doctorate, many students experience a lack of self-efficacy and believe they do not conform to the “normal” student archetype (Hopwood, Alexander, Harris-Huemmert, McAlpine, & Wagstaff, 2011). Part-time doctoral students may believe their lack of contact with others at the university is a negative aspect of their experience; however, their experiences outside of the university while engaged in doctoral study may actually give them opportunity to further develop their scholarly identity, an experience not enjoyed by full-time doctoral students who are immersed in life at the university. Therefore, all doctoral students experience difficulties in their work to complete the degree; they all struggle to succeed and must make best use of the resources available to them. Success is found in navigating the benefits and challenges of being doctoral student.
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