

ABSTRACT

Rethinking the Dissertation: A Case Study on the State of Acceptance of New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

Adeline Torres Meira, Ed.D.

Mentor: Douglas W. Rogers, Ed.D.

This dissertation explored the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences and the rationale for the acceptance, rejection, or undecided participants' positions on this subject. Many authors argue that a traditional dissertation, because of its form and reachability, does not fit the heterogeneous nature of the educational field. New media, which can take many forms, is a 21st century affordance that already permeates the everyday lives of graduate students. Consequently, the theoretical frameworks that guided this dissertation were: (1) multimodal literacy theory, which argues that technological progress has affected the way people communicate and that addresses the multimodalities that are required to teach and learn in the 21st century; and (2) connected learning, which supports the use of new media to foster environments for meaningful experiences and for growth. Participants in this study were members of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), and are thoughtfully engaged in the dialogue about the improvement of their Ed.D. capstone experiences. For this multiple-case qualitative case study, 58 questionnaires were given, 32 responses were

collected followed by relevant document review and 15 semi-structured phone interviews. The findings indicate that new media projects are still often rejected as Ed.D. capstone experiences because of faculty unfamiliarity with what new media is, government sanctions, and because in the participant's views a traditional dissertation means research study. This study also indicates that rigor is the crucial factor in determining the acceptance or rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. Recommendations include educating faculty about new media and its potential benefits for educational research dissemination, conducting research on the construct of rigor as it relates to graduate capstone experiences, and exploring how non-traditional formats of capstone experiences are developed and supported by dissertation mentors and committees.

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by

Adeline Torres Meira, B.F.A, M.S.Ed.

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Larry J. Browning, Ed.D., Chairperson

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Approved by the Dissertation Committee

Douglas W. Rogers, Ed.D., Chairperson

Tony L. Talbert, Ed.D.

Brooke Blevins, Ph.D.

Laine Scales, Ph.D.

Lenore Wright, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS... ..	xi
DEDICATION.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Theoretical Perspectives.....	6
Multimodal Literacy Theory.....	6
Connected Learning	8
The Pragmatic Worldview	9
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	10
Delimitations and Limitations.....	10
Significance of the Study	11
Definition of Key Terms	14
Conclusion.....	15
CHAPTER TWO -LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
Introduction	17
Multimodal Literacies	17
Connected Learning	19
The Nature of Academic Scholarship	20
The Nature of Digital Scholarship	22
The Dissertation as a Genre	23
The Creation of and Access to New Media Forms	24
The Web.....	24
Information Age.....	25
Mobile Devices.....	26
Interaction Age	27
The Nature of New Media.....	27
New Media, Scholarship, and Aesthetics.....	30
The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate	31
Conclusion.....	32
CHAPTER THREE - METHODS.....	34
Introduction	34

Purpose of the Study	34
Research Questions	34
Target Population and Sample	35
Research Design	36
Data Collection Techniques	39
Online Questionnaire	39
Semi-Structured Phone Interviews	40
Document Review.....	41
Data Analysis	42
Research Permission and Ethical Considerations	44
The Role of the Researcher	45
Timeline	45
Conclusion.....	46
 CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS	 47
Introduction	47
Overview of Questionnaire Results.....	48
Distribution and Response Rates	48
Background of Respondents	48
Participant Knowledge of Institutional Capstone Regulation.....	49
Departmental Position on New Media Projects as Capstone Experiences	50
Institutional Capstone Regulation vs. Acceptance of New Media Projects	51
Rationale for Acceptance of New Media as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.....	52
Rationale for Rejection of New Media as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.....	54
Rationale for Not Being Sure about the Acceptance of New Media as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences	58
Overview of Document Analysis	62
Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences	63
Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences	65
Institutions Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences	68
Overview of Phone Interview Results.....	71
Distribution and Response Rates	71
Reported Department Requirements for Ed.D. Capstone Experiences	72
Student Choice on Mentor and Committee.....	73
Departmental Policies Regarding Capstone Experiences.....	75
Reported Institutional Regulations	75
Reported Factors Influencing the Acceptance and Rejection of New Media Project.....	78
The Question of Rigor.....	79
Faculty Advocacy.....	83
It Doesn't Fit the Traditional Model... ..	85
It Doesn't Fit the Traditional Model, But We Might Embed Into It.....	85
Conclusion.....	86

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION	88
Introduction	88
Findings and Interpretations	89
First Research Question	89
Second Research Question	95
Third Research Question	97
Fourth Research Question	103
Limitations	106
Implications and Recommendations	107
Conclusions	110
APPENDICES	114
A - New Media As Capstone Experience/Project Questionnaire	115
B - Phone Interview Protocol	117
C - Informed Consent Form	120
D - Infographic Representation of This Dissertation	122
BIBLIOGRAPHY	123

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Responses to Question 3.....	49
Table 2. Responses to Question 4.....	50
Table 3. Responses to Question 5.....	51
Table 4. Responses to Question 5.1 a).....	54
Table 5. Selected Comments from Participants that Reported Acceptance of New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences in their Institutions.....	54
Table 6. Responses to Question 5.1 b).....	55
Table 7. Selected Comments from Participants that Reported Rejection of New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences in their Institution.	58
Table 8. Responses to Question 5.1 c).....	59
Table 9. Selected Comments from Participants that Reported Being Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences in their Institution.....	62
Table 10. Carnegie Classification of Institution by Sector - Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.....	64
Table 11. Carnegie Classification of Institution by Sector - Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences	67
Table 12. Carnegie Classification of Institution by Sector - Institutions that are Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.....	69
Table 13. Responses to Questionnaire Question 5.....	71
Table 14. Reported Department Requirements for Dissertation Development	73
Table 15. Reported Department Policies Regarding Capstone Experiences	75
Table 16. Reported Institutional Regulation from Participants in Phase 2 of the Study	76
Table 17. Types of Institutional Regulation Reported by Participants in Phase 2 of the Study.....	77

Table 18. Responses to Question 4.....	78
Table 19. Responses to Question 5.....	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Multiple-case design (adapted from Yin, 2009, p.46).....	38
Figure 2. Timeline of the Project.	45
Figure 3. Relationship Between Institutional Regulations and New Media Project Acceptance.	52
Figure 4. Types of Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.	64
Figure 5. 12-month Enrollment Analysis for Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.....	65
Figure 6. Types of Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.	67
Figure 7. 12-month Enrollment Analysis for Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.....	68
Figure 8. Types of Institutions Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.	70
Figure 9. 12-month Enrollment Analysis for Institutions Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.	70
Figure 10. Relationship Between Reported Student Choice on Dissertation Committee and Student Choice on Dissertation Mentor.	74

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To my mom

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.

— Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*

Statement of the Problem

A new time has come. In the second decade of the 21st century, the concepts of emerging technologies and new media have become commonplace. Technologies that once were only available at high-tech laboratories and cutting-edge university research environments now populate homes, offices, and the palms of ordinary people. Information, that was once only available at libraries, universities, printed in journals and published by credible sources is now easily accessible and intertwined with self-published non-academic rhetoric, making it hard for the ordinary consumer of information to determine what is credible and what is not. Technologies have also led to significant changes in the way our society communicates and takes on tasks such as reading, writing, and producing texts (Brill & Park, 2008; Jewitt, 2008; Luke & Carrington, 2002; Marsh, 2007). These new ways for the communication of information allow students to express themselves, their knowledge, and scholarship in multimodal ways (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2003, 2004; Luke & Carrington, 2002). More importantly,

they have the potential of providing students with multimodal ways to consume information and ultimately to promote learning.

For years, professionals in the field of educational technology have taken notice of technological changes in society and their effects in the field of education, learning, and scholarship. Ayers (2013) highlights:

Even the academy, traditionally skeptical of externally generated change, has become blasé about web-induced transformation. Everyone assumes everyone else is on e-mail, is adept with digital library resources, and is electronically connected to professional organizations. Professors fire up Firefox or Skype or Google Earth in class without thinking about using “technology.” These are big changes in education, and they have come quickly.

Yet, the foundation of academic life – the scholarship on which everything else is built–remains surprisingly unaltered. The articles and books that scholars produce today bear little mark of the digital age in which they are created. Researchers routinely use electronic tools in their professional lives but not to transform the substance or form of their scholarship. (p. 27)

That is also true for graduate education, specifically doctoral capstone projects. In many academic fields of study, newer forms of media have yet to be used as a tool for expressing and communicating academic content and educational institutions still retain the traditional form of the dissertation as the demonstrative tool of academic knowledge and capstone experience.

Since the mid-19th century, the dissertation has been used as an instrument for the training of scientific methodology as well as an original and significant contribution of knowledge (Berelson, 1960), which is testimony of its merits. However, Duke & Beck (1999) ardently argue that “the dissertation in its traditional format does not adequately serve either purpose” when it comes to Education capstone projects. They defined the traditional dissertation as “a lengthy document (typically 200-400 pages in length) on a single topic presented through separate chapters for the introduction, literature review,

methodology, results and conclusions” (p. 31). A more recent publication by the Council of Graduate Schools titled *The role and nature of the doctoral dissertation: a policy statement* argues that “dissertation research should provide students with hands-on, directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline, and should prepare students for the types of research/scholarship that will be expected of them after they receive their Ph.D. degree” (Hancock, 1991, p. 3). In addition, when it comes to *the form* of the dissertation the report says that:

Although the “traditional” dissertation as a unified work with an introduction that states and objective, a literature review, a presentation of the methodology or procedures to be used, and a concluding discussion of results should be respected, flexibility with respect of the form also should be permitted. Some disciplines, mainly in the sciences, already permit inclusion in the dissertation of research papers or scholarly articles published by the student. This practice should be adopted more frequently by humanities and social sciences. Whatever the discipline, the published work must be logically connected and integrated into the dissertation in a coherent manner. (p. 4)

According to Fosnot & Perry (2005): “all cultures represent the meaning of experience in some way: through symbol, music, myth, storytelling, art, language, film, explanatory ‘scientific’ models, and/or mathematical forms” (p. 30). Changes in society, advances in new media, information access, and new technologies call for reform for students and scholars alike to demonstrate their academic knowledge and disseminate academic scholarship, therefore providing new ways for consumers to learn and for instructors to teach capitalizing on multimodal literacies.

The focus of the recent literature on doctoral education is often directed to attrition, persistence, job placement, time-to-degree as well as the preparation the doctoral students receive as prospective faculty members (Gaff, 2002; Gardner, 2004;

Geiger, 1997; Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000; Nyquist et al., 1999). McCarthy & Ortloff (2005) emphasize that:

A number of factors have added a new sense of urgency to rethink or re-envisioning the education doctorate. These include changes in doctoral student populations, new demographic trends, the manifold impact of technology, and financial pressures. (p.11)

And according to Patton (2013):

Some universities have started to make changes. Graduate programs in history, literature, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology at the City University of New York, Michigan State University, and the University of Virginia, among other campuses, have put significant amounts of money into digital-humanities centers and new-media and collaborative research programs that can support students who want to work on nontraditional dissertations. (para. 9)

Yet, while all fields of academia ought be facilitating and encouraging innovating ways of expression of academic scholarship that may promote learning and engagement with students and consumers of knowledge, the literature on professional degrees - specifically doctoral programs in education degrees – is limited in displaying such examples. Some institutions have started to partake on the dialog about newer forms of capstone projects. When talking about the participants in the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) Perry & Imig (2008) mention that:

...as a result of these conversations, new forms of the capstone project are emerging. For example, the program at the University of Southern California has introduced thematic dissertations, wherein students conduct individual investigations of field-based problems as part of a group organized around a set of related problems. The University of Houston has put together a candidacy paper task force, which is considering capstone models such as a needs analysis for educational institutions, the development of institutional-change plans, and a critical analysis of a district program. Both the University of Missouri–Columbia and the University of Florida are considering the role that solving “real-world” problems might play in a capstone piece. As a result of the focus on problems of practice, some institutions have suggested that the dissertation committee should include professional as well as academic members. (p. 2)

Having in mind that the goal of a great deal of Ed.D. programs is to target administrators that will promote educational reform and that will be leaders on the field (Auerbach, 2011; McCarthy & Ortloff, 2005) - which would justify an applied research focus - they are often mandated to have a traditional dissertation, what Murphy (2007) considers “the most flagrant example of privileging the university culture over the realities of practice” (p.584). Shulman (1999, p. 160) – supported by Boyer (1990) and Weller (2011) – argues that scholarship involves “acts of the mind or spirit that are undertaken in disciplined ways and subsequently made public so that members of one’s intellectual community can judge their worth and then use them to support the more general program of the community” (as cited in McCarthy & Ortloff, 2005, p. 15). Still, Murphy (2007) discusses the realities of consumers of educational research by saying that:

By and large, principals and superintendents (those not in preparation programs at the time) do not read journal articles. Anyone with 15 minutes of spare time and access to a phone can confirm this fact. But rather than grapple with the real world of school leadership and examine the types of reading one finds there and the avenues by which ideas are weighted and assessed, we continue to offer up views of the world that are comfortable to university folks but of remarkably little use to practicing administrators. We privilege our world and marginalize theirs. (p. 584)

Duke & Beck (1999) propose that the traditional dissertation is an ill-suited format for the training of doctoral students exactly for that reason. It does not train the doctoral students in the communicative aspects of educational research and it does not fulfill the purpose of scholarship because it is largely ineffectual when it comes to contributing to the knowledge in the field. The way educational research is conducted should be treated in a unique way.

Labaree (2003) discusses that "the very heterogeneity of education as a field invites the introduction of different, even incompatible, research methods and rules to govern them (p. 14, as cited in McCarthy & Orloff, 2005). Auerbach (2011) argues that there is a need for doctorate in education programs to explore new paths and that applied research that address problems of practice and are directed to the people in the field can directly address educational problems and are more likely to be seen as relevant and useful by Ed.D. candidates. According to Auerbach (2011) "it would appear that the applied dissertation in Ed.D. programs remains a contested and unresolved issue in the field." When establishing the state of acceptance of new media projects on doctor of education programs as well as the rationale for acceptance, rejection, or neutrality towards the use of new media products for Ed.D. capstone experiences this project can address the need for research that does not focus on attrition, persistence, job placement, time-to-degree as well as the preparation the doctoral students receive as prospective faculty members (Gaff, 2002; Gardner, 2004; Geiger, 1997; Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000; Nyquist et al., 1999).

Theoretical Perspectives

Multimodal Literacy Theory

The major theory that guides this research project is the multimodal literacy theory. Many researchers share the belief that technological progress has been changing how people communicate (Brill & Park, 2008; Jewitt, 2008; Luke & Carrington, 2002; Marsh, 2007). Multimodal literacy theory is the critical review that addresses what

literacy really means in the 21st century as well as explores the multimodality that is required to teach and to learn in the new 21st century world.

The term *multiliteracies* itself was first coined by New London Group (1996) researchers on a paper that was intended to call for a response to the changing social conditions in the communicational landscape brought forth by globalization and the new demands of the workforce from the end of the 20th century. In that paper, they also address that multiliteracies allow literacies to go beyond written and spoken forms of communication to others that could move beyond and across multiple landscapes. Kress (2003), one of the main authors and advocates for the theory of multimodal literacies wrote:

It is no longer possible to think about literacy in isolation from a vast array of social, technological and economical factors. Two distinct yet related factors deserve to be particularly highlighted. These are, one the one hand, the broad move from the now centuries long dominance of writing to the new dominance of the image and, one the other hand, the move from the dominance from the medium of the book to the dominance to the medium of the screen. These two together are producing a revolution in the uses and effects of literacy and of associated means for representing and communicating at every level and every domain. (p. 1)

To that, Jewitt (2008) added:

How knowledge is represented, as well as the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning more generally. That is, the ways in which something is represented shape both *what* is to be learned, that is, the curriculum content, and *how* it is to be learned. It follows, then, that to better understand learning and teaching in the multimodal environment of the contemporary classroom, it is essential to explore the ways in which representations in all modes feature in the classroom. The focus here, then, is on multimodality on the representation and the learning potentials of teaching materials and the ways in which teachers and students activate theses through the interaction in the classroom. (p. 1-2)

While the focus of Jewitt's research is on the school classroom as the primary site for literacy and learning, the researcher in this project believes that focus should be also

directed to the experiences of graduate students and the ways they express their knowledge in their doctoral capstone experiences. The changes between print media as the primary medium for dissemination of knowledge and research to digital media (Kress, 2003) may provide the opportunity for graduate students to showcase their knowledge and research in more innovative ways, which could potentially reach out across many landscapes (even beyond their target populations) while fulfilling the orthodox goals of the doctoral capstone experience.

Connected Learning

Drawn from Sociocultural Learning Theory and developed and published by grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur foundation in conjunction with the Digital Media and Learning initiative, Connected Learning is a model of approaching learning as an embedded part of meaningful experiences that may happen through diverse ways and forms but that still happen with the presence of supportive relationships and appropriate environments and networks (Ito et al., 2013). While the ongoing research from this theory of learning is directed to young students, Ito et. al. (2013)'s report "investigates how we can use new media to foster the growth and sustenance of environments that support connected learning in a broad-based and equitable way" (p.4).

Mizuno et. al. (2013) define it as:

"Connected learning is realized when a young person pursues a personal interest or passion with the support of friends and caring adults, and is in turn able to link this learning and interest to academic achievement, career possibilities, or civic engagement. (...) Connected learning looks to digital media and communications to: 1) offer engaging formats for interactivity and self-expression, 2) lower barriers to access for knowledge and information, 3) provide social supports for learning through social media and online affinity groups, and 4) link a broader and more diverse range of culture, knowledge and expertise to educational opportunity. (p. 6)

The Pragmatic Worldview

Rossman & Wilson (1985; paraphrased in Creswell, 2009) highlighted that this worldview allows the researcher to focus on the research problems and uses as many different approaches for methodology available in order to understand the problem. In fact, Creswell mentions that authors such as Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998), Morgan (2007), and Patton (1990) make a point to emphasize the importance of focusing the attention on the research problem, especially in the social sciences, as well as using pluralistic approaches to originate more knowledge about that problem. The consequences from the research, such as the actions, outcomes, applications, and solutions lead the pragmatic researcher to find answers to his questions (Morgan, 2007; M. Q. Patton, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Some of the main ideas of this approach are, according to Creswell (2007, 2009):

- Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality.
- Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. They are “free” to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes.
- Truth is what works at the time; it is not based in a dualism between reality independent of mind or within the mind.
- Pragmatist researchers look to the “what” and “how” to research based on its intended consequences-where they want to go with it.
- Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts. (p. 23)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at participating institutions of the CPED. The study also served to seek explanation as to why some of the institutions accept or

reject new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences in order to understand the possible reason for barriers on the adoption of such projects.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the investigation of the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences:

1. What is the current state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at CPED participating programs? What are the participant's rationale for their positions?
2. What are the patterns between the type and size of the institutions and the acceptance, rejection, or undecided position about new media projects as capstone experiences for Ed.D. candidates?
3. What are the most common requirements for capstone experiences at CPED institutions' Ed.D. programs?
4. What factors do CPED institutions' participants perceive as pertinent in the acceptance and rejection of new media projects as capstone experiences in Ed.D. programs?

Delimitations and Limitations

This study targeted doctorate of education degree granting universities in the United States that are consortium members from the CPED at the time of data collection. The responses of the participants should reflect their official departmental views on the acceptance of new media projects as capstone experiences for doctor of education candidates. However, there are limitations to the use of a criteria based purposeful sample

including the fact that the sample may not be representative of all population (Creswell, 2002). CPED consortium members, according to the program's description, are committed to its agenda and are purposefully open to a dialogue to improving their programs. Therefore the results of this research may not be generalizable to the whole population of doctorate of education degree granting institutions in the United States. While the professional opinions of the participants are requested, it is possible that some of them might answer the questions from this study with their personal opinions on the topic introducing some response bias. However, the researcher attempted to minimize that by providing instructions in a cover letter to all participants that all answers should be answered based on their professional and official positions as program directors. In addition, and because of the qualitative nature of this project, there was a risk for introduction of bias from the investigator in the data analysis as well as the risk of possible different interpretations, which will later be discussed in the *Role of the Researcher* section.

Significance of the Study

Emergent technologies and the creation of new media outlets have dramatically influenced the world of today. In fact, their presence and power have extended to affect the publication and expression of academic knowledge (Russell K, Weinberger E, & Stone A, 1999). More than ever before the ubiquity of information found beyond the sheltered environments of traditional books and classrooms and the multiplicity of sources of information have forced educators' responsibilities to include modeling and teaching students how to sort through the overwhelming amount of available information - weather it is print, online, or in any other media format - as well as to produce reliable

scholarship. Most importantly, at a time where unreliable resources are likely to be more available than academically reputable ones it is the researcher's belief that it is a matter of civic responsibility for educators to strive to make the scholarship they produce available to anyone interested in it, and in as many formats as possible. However, traditional forms of institutional education have not fully accepted emergent technologies as legitimate. According to Edminster & Moxley (2002), "electronic writing spaces are transforming graduate education – enhancing mentoring and the shape of dissertation content," therefore the need to increase access to current scholarship is vital. Furthermore, Luke & Carrington (2002), argue that because there are wider social and cultural changes or mindsets in society, and in order to offer students with opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding that will be needed in the new knowledge economy, educational institutions need to respond.

Allen (2003) argues that "ultimately, technology will force us to acknowledge the global context of education, the multicultural nature of society, and the continued transformation of requirements and opportunities – personal, professional, and institutional" (p. 50). Changes in the world, which include the technologies that permeate it, call for an immediate re-examination of the ways scholarship can be disseminated. Academia, being a forum for creative and innovative practices presents itself as an ideal environment for avant-garde initiatives to take place. The products that graduate programs allow as capstone projects could be great vehicles for change in how scholarship is created and disseminated, especially with the use of new media. Additionally, Kerlin (1995) states that most of the studies on nationwide trends of doctoral candidates are limited to statistics on student enrollment as well as statistics on

degree recipients, but very little of the current literature explores doctoral education capstone projects and virtually none explore the use of new media as tools of communication of academic scholarship, which offered the researcher with a great opportunity to assess and address that issue.

In her research, Auerbach (2011) highlights that recently Ed.D. programs have started to re-examine their missions and initiatives. Organizations like CPED, which includes almost sixty member programs “has as one of its areas of focus the exploration of alternative capstone experiences for Ed.D. candidates” (p.61). Auerbach also cites the proposition of an alternate approach with “well-designed applied research of value for informing educational practice” that “reflects theory or knowledge for addressing decision-oriented problems in applied settings” (Young, 2006, as cited in Auerbach, 2011, p. 61). Yet, new media projects – which are relatively recent affordances, but address a lot of applied research goals while being supported by the theory of multimodal literacies and connected learning – are not widely considered as an alternative to the traditional dissertation.

Finally, it is important to underline that although the quote by Thomas Jefferson prefaced in this chapter refers to government institutions and the laws that govern a country, it also proves true when applied to academia and the products that emerge from it. The world has changed, progressed, and a lot of its developments, enlightenments, and new discoveries have been possible because of the development and growth of new technologies. Because of those truths, it is safe to say that the way that people interact with the world and information have changed and that change of circumstances should be observed by educational institutions to keep pace with the times. This was an

exceptionally opportune time to conduct this research to determine the state of acceptance of new media projects as capstone experiences in Ed.D. programs and to promote the dialogue about non-traditional dissertation formats in Ed.D. programs which, as the review of the literature supports in Chapter Two, are reflective of the time we are living in, the tools that are available, and the needs on the field.

Definition of Key Terms

Applied Research is the type of research that is directed towards the solution of immediate practical problems in education (Carroll, 1969).

Connected Learning investigates how students capitalize on the use of new media to foster the pursuit of learning in a topic of personal interest with the guidance of a connected social group of friends and mentors (Mizuno et. al., 2013).

Dissertation is a writing requirement for a doctoral degree that is often an original contribution to the research knowledge in its field (Glossary of U.S. Educational Terminology, 2002).

Doctoral Capstone Experience is the systematic inquiry of a problem of practice that is contextualized within a theoretical and research literature in order to fulfill a requirement of a doctoral degree (Dawson & Kumar, 2014).

Doctoral Degree is the highest degree of graduate study that a student may earn. It can be in many different professional areas including: Doctor of Education, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Psychology, and many others (Common Data Set of U.S. Higher Education Terminology, 2002).

Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) is the professional doctorate in education that prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation

of new knowledge, and for the stewardship of the profession (“The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate,” 2013).

Multimodal Literacies investigate how different semiotic resources such as gesture, images, and language, partnered with multiple modes of communication such as visual, somatic or aural, are interacted and constructed with the goal to represent and communicate meaning in a coherent way (Lim, 2011).

New Media are the aesthetic properties of data and the basic ways in which information is created, stored, and rendered intelligible (Manovich, 2001). It can assume many forms and it evolves and morphs continuously (Socha & Eber-Schmid, n.d.).

The World Wide Web (The Web) is a part of the Internet accessed through a graphical user interface (browser) and containing documents often connected by hyperlinks (“World Wide Web,” n.d.).

Conclusion

Chapter One provides a rationale for this research project by highlighting societal changes that affect the world and how people communicate. It also provided a brief discussion about the theoretical frameworks that guided this study. The theory of multimodal literacies supports the use of many mediums, which could include a vast number of new media products, as demonstrative tool for knowledge. Connected learning promotes the use of new media by students in their pursuit of learning in a topic of personal interest and looks at digital media as a way to offer engaging formats for interactivity and self-expression while providing social supports for learning and linking a broader and more diverse ranges of culture, knowledge, and expertise to students’ educational opportunities. New media can take many forms based on the technological

innovations of the time aiding in more educational action research projects. That is particularly relevant when it comes to Ed.D. capstone experiences based on its heterogeneity, purpose, and audience. Chapters Two and Three will describe in more detail the conceptual frameworks, the literature review, as well as the research methodology conducted in this study which helped determine the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. By revealing the current state of acceptance of these projects, the rationale for the participants' acceptance, rejection or neutrality towards them, and the factors that might influence both the acceptance and rejection of these projects based on the participants' professional opinions this study will be able to provide Ed.D. program directors and graduate program administrators with a better understanding of the reasons these projects have not yet been widely considered, as well as the areas that need to be developed in order for such projects gain traction and acceptance. Ultimately, the researcher hopes that this understanding may encourage programs directors and administrators to allow 21st century graduate students and novice academics to experiment with novel ways of expression of learning and dissemination of academic research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

As highlighted in Chapter One, the traditional dissertation format remains the demonstrative tool of doctoral student knowledge in the scientific since the 19th century. However, new theories and technologies that have emerged in the 21st century might support alternate modes of expression that might aid students on demonstrating their knowledge while developing and completing their Ed.D. capstone experiences. In this chapter these theories and developments will be discussed.

Multimodal Literacies

According to Kress (2010) the idea of multimodality as a social semiotic theory intends to understand why and how people learn, know, and shape their knowledge and communication as well as the information around them based on the world and an individual's place in it. He highlights that:

Image has been a part of human cultures longer than script – though the difference between the two is not at all clear-cut. *Image* has been the subject of much interest, academic or otherwise, over millennia. *Gesture* is a presence in all cultures, even if in quite different ways. As ‘sign language’ it has been elaborated and articulated into a fully functioning representational resource. (...) Academic disciplines have their interest in particular modes: Psychology in *gesture*; Art History in *image*, as has Mathematics, if differently so; *music* is studied in conservatories the world over. One difference is that whereas before these were the subject of interest in distinct areas of academic work, now there is an attempt to bring all means of making meaning together under one theoretical roof, as part of a single field in a unified account, a unifying theory. (p. 5)

And the reason for the unification of a theory is that the world around us has changed significantly. These changes are technological, economical, social, and cultural and they have changed how people communicate and express their knowledge (Brill & Park, 2008; Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2010; Luke & Carrington, 2002; Marsh, 2007).

Kress extensively discussed the changes in the world and how they change how people produce and disseminate their messages, meanings, and ultimately how they represent their knowledge. Those changes are clearly recognizable in popular culture, particularly in the media. Kress (2010) argues:

at the level of *media* and the *dissemination* of messages – most markedly in the shift from the book and the page to the screen; at the level of *semiotic production* in the shift from the other technologies of print to digital, electronic means; and, in *representation*, in the shift from the dominance of the mode of *writing* to the mode of *image*, as well as others. The effects are felt everywhere, in theory no less than in the practicalities of day-to-day living. Academic interest in the characteristics of this new communicational world, the world of the screen and of multimodality, has been relatively belated, stumbling after the horse which has left the stable some while ago. Belated or not, there is a need to catch up and get back in the saddle. (p. 6)

Because of the societal changes and the transitions from writing as the prominent mode of communication to a world where the dissemination of knowledge is prevalently seen in a digital environment Jewitt (2008) proposes that:

The potential impact of new social and material conditions on communication and education is profound. They allow for new possibilities and constraints for representation and communication. They also place emergent demands on the communicative repertoires of people to participate in the global economy as well as on the construction of knowledge and the performativity of self in face-to-face, local, and virtual contexts. (p. 243)

Kress (2001) also builds upon that idea by saying that:

Making a representation now goes well beyond simple encoding. It has become a matter of active, deliberate design, and meaning – making becomes a matter of the individual's active shaping and reshaping of resources that he or she has

available, in the wish to make representations march intentions as closely as possible. (p. 2)

This mathetic process of thinking about thinking as well as thinking about representing with novel resources builds on the concept of *multiliteracies* (as previously mentioned in Chapter One), and according to Jewitt (2008) “multiliteracies sets out to stretch literacy beyond the constraints of official standard forms of written and spoken language to connect with the culturally and linguistically diverse landscapes and the multimodal texts that are mobilized and circulate across these landscapes” (p. 245).

Connected Learning

In the 2013 report *Connected Learning: an Agenda for Research and Design*, Ito et al. “synthesized a body of empirical and design research in order to propose an approach to learning and educational reform that leverages the opportunities afforded by new media in the service of a more equitable educational system” (p. 87). While their research focus was in educational research settings that involve youth learners, the same principles can be applied for all levels of education. The guiding interconnected design principles for connected learning that guide the creation of connected learning environments are:

Everyone can participate - Experiences invite participation and provide many different ways for individuals and groups to contribute; Learning happens by doing – Learning is experiential and part of the pursuit of meaningful activities and projects; Challenge is constant – Interest or cultivation of an interest creates both a ‘need to know’ and a ‘need to share;’ Everything is interconnected – Young people are provided with multiple learning contexts to engaging in connected learning – contexts in which they receive immediate feedback on progress, have access to tools for planning and reflection, and are given opportunities for mastery of specialist language and practices. (p. 78)

In addition, they highlight that:

many young people experience learning in the three spheres of interest, peer culture, and academic as disconnected, and do not have sufficient exposure or support to explore their interests. (...) Connected learning, as its name implies, works to connect these spheres more purposefully. (p. 65)

Such principles can and should be valid when applied in the work of novice academics.

The core properties of connected learning experiences are that digital tools can offer students with multiple opportunities to produce media and knowledge in an experimental and active way. There is also a shared purpose that has only become available with the development of social media and web-based communities where the opportunity to reach out to a broader audience and this open networked environment makes these resources accessible to all learners.

The Nature of Academic Scholarship

Unsworth (2000) suggests *primitives*, or basic functions that are common to scholarly work through all disciplines and that are not dependent on a theoretical orientation. Those are: (1) To discover – through research or analysis of archives; (2) To annotate – in order to add layers of annotation; (3) To compare – across data sets, languages, and context; (4) To refer – to reference and to acknowledge; (5) To sample – selecting the suitable sample of participants, (6) To illustrate – to explain, to make it clear for the audience; and (7) To represent – To communicate externally or to publish.

Similarly, Boyer (1990) defined scholarship by suggesting four components, which should be considered as being of equal value by universities. In *The Digital Scholar: How Technology is Transforming Scholarly Practice*, Weller (2011) summarizes those components:

Discovery- This is the creation of new knowledge in a specific area or discipline, This is often taken to be synonymous with research. This is probably closest to the public conception of scholarship, as universities are often the site of significant breakthroughs.

Integration – This is focused on interpretation and interdisciplinary work. It is moving away from the pure, ‘genesis’ research of discovery. Boyer states that it is “making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context. Illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists.

Application – This is related to the concept of service, but Boyer makes a distinction between citizenship and scholarly types of service, and for the latter it needs to build on the scholar’s area of expertise. It can be seen as engagement with the wider world outside academia, which might include public engagement activities as well as input into policy and general media discussions. This can also include the time spent peer-reviewing journal articles and grant applications and sitting on various committees

Teaching – Much of the interpretation of Boyer can be seen as an attempt to raise the profile of teaching. He argues that ‘the work of the professor becomes consequential only as understood by others. Yet, today, teaching is often viewed as a routine function, tacked on.’ (p. 42-43)

In *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Boyer (1990) also emphasized that:

for America’s colleges and universities to remain vital a new vision of scholarship is required. What we are faced with, today, is the need to clarify campus missions and relate the work of the academy more directly to the realities of contemporary life. We need especially to ask how institutional diversity can be strengthened and how the rich array of faculty talent in our colleges and universities might be more effectively used and continuously renewed. We proceed with the conviction that if the nation’s higher learning institutions are to meet today’s urgent academic and social mandates, their missions must be carefully redefined and the meaning of scholarship creatively reconsidered (p. 13).

This state of academia where much emphasis is given to research and where the focus has been removed from the student and the art of teaching is still prevalent in higher education and is reflected in the ways scholarship is created and shared with the world.

The Nature of Digital Scholarship

According to Ayers (2013) the concept of digital scholarship emerged from the expansion of the digital world and the World Wide Web (Web) in the 1990s where, despite the slow speed of processors and limited servers, the world seemed to be a place where scholars could create a new exciting and full of experimentation environment. Around that time, many digitization efforts started to flourish from organizations like the Library of Congress and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. According to Ayers (2013):

Although the phrase refers to issues surrounding copyright and open access and sometimes to scholarship analyzing the online world, *digital scholarship* – emanating, perhaps, from *digital humanities* – most frequently describes discipline-based scholarship produced with digital tools and presented in digital form. (p. 27)

Developments in technology and information tools such as the Internet allow for the advancement of the scholarly information structure and they can facilitate distribution and collaboration of data. This calls for a shift in policy environments that may have great impact on the future of scholarly environments (Borgman, 2007). The system of academic rewards that is still based on the publication of books, articles, and conference papers influences the products of graduate programs. While the doctoral dissertations are seen by faculty as a way for students to train their research skills and to demonstrate them to their audience (Isaac, Quinlan, & Walker, 1992) their readership are often limited to the writer's committee. For the dissertation contents to be disseminated to a larger audience in the form of a published article they often need to be reworked from their original form (Duke & Beck, 1999), and even so their readership is limited to the readers that have access to the journals in which the article was published. Ayers (2013) calls academics to take better advantage of the digital medium and innovations. Digital

scholarship might provide more impact than just simply substituting or mimicking their non-digital equivalents. By experimenting with them we are able to encourage new ways of writing, explaining, and communicating, which are a very relevant demand in today's technology riddled world.

The Dissertation as a Genre

In *Education Should Consider Alternative Formats for the Dissertation*, Duke and Beck (1999) classify the dissertation as a genre based on both its classical and modern definitions. The classical sense refers to Aristotle's (1991) definition, which classifies a genre as having an identifiable *form* and *content*. The *form*, when it comes to the dissertation, is very much standardized by having a theme, an introduction, a literature review, a methodology, a description of the results, and a final conclusion that discusses the meaning of the results. The *content* is restricted to being an original piece of research. In addition, the dissertation is written with a goal, a *telos*, of receiving a doctorate degree and it is directed to a very particular audience (the consumers of information in that field). The modern definition, which also supports the dissertation as being a genre, according to Todorov (1976) is a "codification of discourse properties" (p. 162, as cited in Duke and Beck, 1999) which gives the audience a "horizon of expectations" and to the authors "models of writing" (p. 163, as cited in Duke and Beck, 1999). Duck and Beck (1999) argue that even though the dissertation can be considered a genre it is very challenging because it has limited audience and dissemination. The readership is usually limited for the dissertation committees and family members, and even in the case where another reader wants to retrieve it does not mean that it will reach a larger audience. They also point out that:

However physically accessible dissertations become, the length and style associated with the traditional dissertation format make them impractical for many audiences. This is especially problematic for dissertations that are directly relevant to practitioners, whose jobs as teachers, counselors, and principals leave little time to seek out or read documents of this length and style.

Referring back to Aristotle's (1991) and others' inclusion of audience as a key element in the rhetorical situation that defines genre, we must ask ourselves if the members of the doctoral student's committees are truly the only ones by whom the dissertation should be read, or for whom the dissertation should be written. Furthermore, the dissertation's limited audience makes its status as a piece of research as questionable as its status as a genre.

(...) With an ungeneralizable genre comes a missed opportunity for transfer of knowledge and skills that will actually benefit the student in the long term. (p. 32)

The Creation of and Access to New Media Forms

Two of the most significant technological advances that have impacted the creation of and the access to new media form are the propagation of the Web and the emergence of mobile devices.

The Web

While the Web was a product of the 20th century, at that time, it was very limited in access, flexibility, and creativity; that is why it is commonly characterized as Web 1.0. In addition, this term refers to a world where technological tools were mostly licensed, isolated, offline, and that relied on a single creator, proprietary code as well as copyrighted content. At the end of the 20th century however, the Web saw a significant change. Advances in networking technologies in addition to the popularization of personal computers and mobile technologies allowed for broader access to the web, allowing society to connect with each other in the widest way ever, publish to a broader

audience, and disseminate knowledge in non-traditional formats (Brill & Park, 2008; Milne, 2007; “The Ongoing Web Revolution,” 2007).

Today, at the early part of the 21st century, the Web is identified as Web 2.0. Some of its main qualities is that it allows the world to be collaborative and online, grants multiple collaborators on a single task, uses open source, and users can share content on a free platform (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). All of these attributes make the contemporary Web participatory, cost-effective, highly accessible, and a fertile ground for digital scholarship. Additionally, Web 2.0 has been known to provide many other benefits for education, which boosted its presence in education settings. One of the more important ones is that it allows the educational experience to take place outside the traditional brick walls, where face-to-face time restrictions no longer apply, but where teachers have enhanced access to monitor performance (Solomon & Schrum, 2007; “The Ongoing Web Revolution,” 2007).

Information Age

It is important to underline that Web 2.0 has not only impacted the field of education, but it has impacted in large the world we are living in today. Web 2.0 tools allow virtually anyone to self-publish on the Web resulting in the exponential increase of the amount of information easily accessible online. According to the 2012 Visual Networking Index Report the Internet is projected to swell up to four times its current size by 2016 (CQ Researcher, 2008). This period, characterized by an abundant increase of access and delivery of digital content, has been termed by Milne (2007) as the “Information Age.” While fascinating and promising, the Information Age innately

presents a dangerous dichotomy: information has been vastly produced, but inevitably inaccurate sources can be found just as much as reliable ones (CQ Researcher, 2008).

Mobile Devices

In addition to the growth of information, means of accessibility have significantly changed and are now highly facilitated by the widespread presence of mobile handheld devices. These devices, according to Keegan (2007), are becoming increasingly common because of technological advances in wireless bandwidth, data networks, as well as miniaturization, therefore quality and capability have only increased. Milne (2007) adds that “portable devices hold a primary position among today’s technologies because they place powerful capabilities at a user’s fingertips in a manner of seconds” (p. 20). These advances in technology promoted what Quinn (2000) defines as “mobile learning.” Mobile learning (m-learning), in his words is the “intersection of mobile computing and e-learning (electronic learning): accessible resources wherever you are, strong search capabilities, rich interaction, powerful support for effective learning, and performance-based assessment. E-learning is independent of location in time or space” (p. 8). M-learning allows students to learn independently of a geographical place and capitalizes on the interaction between mobile devices and learners. According to Suki & Suki (2011), studies show that m-learning is beneficial to a great variety of learners including “mature aged, gifted, and remote learners, as well as those with cognitive, behavioral or social problems, or with physical and mental difficulties” (p. 45). Furthermore, benefits of portability include the fostering of a greater feeling of ownership over the learner’s work (Passey, 1999). Portable technology can engage the students or any other consumer of knowledge and make them active participants with higher learning outcomes (Prosser &

Trigwell, 1999). The interaction and active participation makes learning more enjoyable (Sixsmith, Dyson, & Nataatmadja, 2006).

Interaction Age

The era brought forth by the development of mobile technologies is what Milne (2007) calls the “Interaction Age.” According to him “the Interaction Age is a logical extension of the Information Age; it is built on a foundation of familiar information technologies, but it extends these technologies – and emerging new ones – to emphasize interactivity over mere content delivery” (p. 14). These changes are significant, and according to Brill & Park (2008) “evidence suggests that thinking patterns, in addition to behavioral patterns, are changing with today’s students in part, at least, to their native environment of ubiquitous digital technologies and considerable levels, since birth, of interaction within it” (p. 71).

The Nature of New Media.

New media can assume many different forms like a website, a comic, a phone application, augmented reality, or a wearable technology. The forms are literally endless. Yet, with the growth of the web, mobile devices, and the cultures of creation of information and interaction all assume a common quality: they can be accessed anywhere and anytime, from tablets or smartphones with network connections, and those allow for immediate user feedback. In *The Language of New Media*, which has been one of the most read and cited texts and has defined the field of software studies, the author offers five principles for defining digital technology and new media: numeric representation, modularity, automation, variability, and transcoding. While they seem to represent

universal defining laws of new media, they are instead a description of “the aesthetic properties of data and the basic ways in which information is created, stored, and rendered intelligible” (Manovich, 2001, p. 378). For example, in his unique essay *Time Frames*, McCloud (1993) defined comics as sequential art or juxtaposed pictorial and other images in a deliberate sequence. In this narrative, he uses a form of new media – the comics – to write about comics and uses illustration to illustrate his points.

McCloud’s essay bridges worlds that are not often connected: new media, aesthetics, and communication. Unfortunately, while traditional forms of research in dissertation writing are the norm, embracing art as means for communicating academic scholarship has not been explored in a significant capacity. Wardrip-Fruin & Montfort (2003), describe McCloud’s contribution:

What McCloud’s work nevertheless shows is that new forms, even those that have not been studied seriously for centuries or even decades, do indeed have certain conventions and rules, and that if the form being studied is considered with care and thought, these rules can be determined, benefiting those who work in the form, who are striving to improve the practice of their art (p. 711).

Traditional forms of scholarship often rely on “science.” Eisner (2004), clearly contrasted the characteristics of both science and the arts by citing that:

while science was considered dependable, the artistic process was not. Science was cognitive, the arts were emotional. Science was teachable, the arts required talent. Science was testable, the arts a matter of preference. Science was useful and the arts were ornamental (...) one relied on art when there was no science to provide guidance. Art was a fall-back position. (p. 3)

In *Scholarship Reconsidered – Priorities of the Professoriate*, Boyer (1990) urges for a new vision of scholarship:

What we now have is a more restricted view of scholarship, one that limits it to a hierarchy of functions. Basic research has come to be viewed as the first and most essential form of scholarly activity, with other functions flowing from it.” (p. 15)

As it was previously mentioned in this paper, in his definition of scholarship Boyer explains that the work of an academic is composed of four separate, but interconnected, functions: scholarship of *discovery*, scholarship of *integration*, scholarship of *application*, and scholarship of *teaching*. Scholarship of *discovery* is the one best represents what is commonly known as “research.” Scholarship of *integration* is the research that involves doing research where fields converge to respond to both new intellectual questions and emerging human problems. Scholarship of *application* bridges the gaps between investigation to application and contribution to human knowledge. Scholarship of *teaching* makes itself consequential only when other people understand the work of the scholar. In *Scholarship Assessed – Evaluation of the Professoriate*, Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff (1997) discuss the documentation of scholarship by saying:

The biggest challenge that a broadened view of scholarship poses for documentation concerns the types and sources of materials that provide evidence of quality. Simply put, some scholarly activities are more readily documented than others. The scholarship of discovery, with its established system of peer review, especially falls into this category. (...) Books and articles intended for a scholarly audience can easily be submitted to review committees, as can evidence of the extent of their impact through such means as book reviews, citation counts, and solicited evaluations from specialists attesting to the cumulative worth of a scholar’s contribution. Many scholarly activities are not so easily reviewed (p. 38).

Later, they urge for reform by saying that “institutions and departments that are serious about expanding the scope of scholarship must acknowledge that scholarly work does not always adorn itself in the traditional cap and gown” (p. 38). In fact, they believe that institutions and department should be open to a more innovative array of materials so that new forms of scholarship are treated fairly.

Graduate students or novice scholars are faced with a great dilemma: conforming to traditional forms of dissertation by partaking on the scholarship of *discovery*, and

ignoring the other modes of scholarship that are also disciplined and investigative, but are expressed in non-traditional ways. Boyer (1990) states:

More thought should be given to the purpose and content of the dissertation. As things now stand, the dissertation is often thought of as original research, usually on an increasingly isolated topic. Consequential assertions are to be footnoted and students are discouraged from introducing ideas of their own. Creative integrative thinking is often repressed. (...) Could doctoral candidates, at the end of their dissertation, be encouraged to editorialize more and place it in larger context? And finally, could more credit be given for independent thinking? (p. 68-69)

New Media, Scholarship, and Aesthetics

If the very term pedagogy means the art of teaching (Parks, 1992) why have the artistry of teaching or the artistry of communicating academic scholarship been overshadowed by traditional scholarship? How can creative work be considered scholarship? Can creative work include scholarship of application and integration?

According to Mark Tribe, in Manovich's 2001 *The Language of New Media*'s foreword:

Art has always been bound up with technology, and artists have always been among the first to adopt new technologies as they emerge. We monkey around with new technologies in an effort to see what they can do, to make them do things the engineers never intended, to understand what they might mean, to reflect on their effects, to push them beyond their limits, to break them. (p. xi)

Later, he adds that "new media attracts innovators, iconoclasts, and risk-takers. As a result, some of the hottest creative minds spend their time hacking around with new technologies that we barely understand" (p. xii).

In *Letters to a New Teacher: A Curriculum of Embodied Aesthetic Awareness*, Sameshima (2008) shares reflective letters from a university mentor to a new teacher. In the first letter of the series, the author reports the first instance when art was separated from mind and body:

The bifurcation of mind and body in the arts occurred during the rule of Louis XIV in the eighteenth century. It was during this time that the “artisan” was replaced with the “artist,” [...] since then sensuous knowledge has been separated from the body and transferred into the art object, which is put on display. The separation between maker and product produces an inanimate object, which can then easily be sorted and categorized as a superficial commodity. (p. 31)

With that in mind, creators of academic scholarship, including graduate students, should be able to reconnect their minds and bodies, integrate themselves as learners in the process, and create products that are beyond inanimate objects. In fact, Eisner (2004) suggests another vision for education. In this vision, a distinctive form of thinking that is relevant to all aspects of a person’s life – from teaching, to curriculum design, to the context in which both teachers and students live – should be aimed at preparing students as artists or “individuals who have developed the ideas, the sensibilities, the skills, and the imagination to create work that is well proportioned, skillfully executed, and imaginative, regardless of the domain in which an individual works” (p. 4).

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate

According to CPED (2013), more than 50 colleges and schools of education have joined them providing resources to collectively examine their doctorate in education programs in a critical dialogue, experimentation, feedback, and evaluation in order to rethink their programs. The foremost goal of these CPED participant institutions is to make their programs stronger and more relevant when preparing educational practitioners for the field. The project has been divided in two phases. Phase I, which took place from 2007-2010, had the support of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Council for Academic Deans of Research Education Institutions (CADREI). It began with twenty-five institutions and through their bi-annual meetings and online

collaborations produced definitions of the Ed.D. as well as working principles to guide the development of programs and design concepts that define the core of Ed.D. programs. Phase II, intended to last from 2010-2013 and was possible after the CPED was awarded \$700,000 from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), allowed the consortium to study twenty one of the original plus eight California State University campuses and twenty-seven new universities on a mixed-methods, multi-case study to continue the discussions about the Education Doctorate. As part of its research component and during its first year, the CPED examined capstone projects of Ed.D. programs. According Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen (2012):

CPED-partner institutions have reported their efforts to transform doctoral education through emphasis on (a) the scholarship of teaching, (b) the identification of a signature pedagogy, (c) the creation of laboratories of practice that undertake best evidence analysis, and (d) the development of new capstone experiences in which Ed.D. candidates demonstrate their proficiencies in scholarship. (p. 408)

Yet, Perry & Imig (2008) highlighted that a common response from the participants was that they were not aware of a good criteria for those capstone projects however, that many faculty were determined to break the mold of the traditional dissertation format with others that more relevantly apply to 21st century schools and colleges. New media projects, as this chapter has illustrated could be one of those tools that might assist on breaking the mold of the traditional dissertation format while being very relevant to 21st century schools, colleges, and audiences.

Conclusion

Chapter Two provided a deeper description of the multimodal literacies and connected learning theories that served as theoretical frameworks to guide this study. In

addition it highlighted the most prominent literature publications that support the study of alternate forms for capstone experiences and the changes in society that call for such development including the ideological functions for the dissertation or capstone experience, the changes in the ways new media forms are created and accessed, the nature of scholarship, the nature new media, as well as the nature of aesthetics when it comes to pedagogy. Chapter Three will describe in detail the methodologies that were used to conduct this research project.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

In this chapter the research methods will be discussed in detail including the purpose of the study and the research questions (as previously described on Chapter One), the case study design, the data collection methods, the data analysis methods, research permission and ethical considerations, the role of the researcher, as well as the timeline for this project.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at participating institutions of the CPED. The study also served to seek explanation as to why some of the institutions accept or reject new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences in order to understand the possible reason for barriers on the adoption of such projects.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the investigation of the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences:

1. What is the current state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at CPED participating programs? What are the participant's rationale for their positions?

2. What are the patterns between the type and size of the institutions and the acceptance, rejection, or undecided position about new media projects as capstone experiences for Ed.D. candidates?
3. What are the most common requirements for capstone experiences at CPED institutions' Ed.D. programs?
4. What factors do CPED institutions' participants perceive as pertinent in the acceptance and rejection of new media projects as capstone experiences in Ed.D. programs?

Target Population and Sample

The target population in this study was selected through a criteria based purposeful sampling and they were the participant institutions of CPED. According to Creswell (2007) this type of sampling is commonly used in qualitative research, “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problems and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 125). In order to be selected to participate in this study, institutions should also meet a criterion, which is “useful for quality assurance” (Creswell, 2007, p. 127). In, this case, institutions must be participating in the CPED project at the moment when the data collection takes place. At the point of data collection, there were a total of 58 programs in 52 institutions listed as members of the CPED consortium (n=58) and those institutions varied in size and type. As previously highlighted in this document’s literature review, and according to The CPED (2013)’s website:

CPED has engaged over 50 colleges and schools of education which have committed resources to work together to undertake a critical examination of the doctorate in education through dialog, experimentation, critical feedback and

evaluation. The intent of the project is to collaboratively redesign the Ed.D. and to make it a stronger and more relevant degree for the advanced preparation of school practitioners and clinical faculty, academic leaders and professional staff for the nation's schools and colleges and the learning organizations that support them.

As part of the CPED project, participants are actively rethinking their capstone experiences and represent a distinct variety of universities; therefore they were an ideal population for this research project.

Research Design

This study employed a case study design. According to Creswell (2007):

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. For example, several programs (a *multi-site* study) or a single program (a *within-site* study) may be selected for the study. (p. 73)

As a research method case study is often used in social sciences fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, social work, education, political science and others because it can help researchers understand in more depth issues related to individuals, groups and particular phenomena (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) describes this design as a relevant, yet challenging method of conducting research in the social sciences, but Merriam (1998) writes that these types of studies are very prevalent in the field of education and the choice of using a case study design stems from the fact that these researchers are often searching for “insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (p. 28). Nonetheless, the bounded system or case that researcher will focus on must represent some concern or issue that needs to be studied.

According to Yin (2009):

The same study may contain more than a single case. When this occurs, the study has used a multiple-case design, and such designs have increased in frequency in recent years. A common example is a study of school innovations (such as the use of new curricula, rearranged school schedules, or a new educational technology), in which individual schools adopt some innovation. Each school might be the subject of an individual case study, but the study as a whole covers several schools and in this way uses a multiple-case design (p. 53).

While the target populations in this study are member institutions of the CPED, focus was given to individual institutions in order for a more extensive analysis of their views and to give more insight into the problem studied (see Figure 1). Yin (2009) also argues that choosing the multiple-case design is more preferable than going for a single-case because the researcher has the chance of a *literal replication* the findings (same results) or a *theoretical replication* (when the results contrast with each other, but with a predictable reason), therefore having a more powerful study.

Qualitative case studies provide deeper insight into an issue or a phenomenon, they also present weaknesses which include researcher bias and credibility. Merriam (1998) highlights that the two phases in which these are likely to happen are the data collection and data analysis. However, there are ways in which the quality of such types of empirical research can be tested and that are commonly listed by many social science methods authors (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009, Creswell, 2009). They are:

1. *Construct validity*: identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied.
2. *Internal validity* (for explanatory or causal studies only and not for descriptive or exploratory studies): seeking to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships
3. *External validity*: defining the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized

4. *Reliability*: demonstrating that the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures – can be repeated, with the same results (Yin, 2009, p. 40)

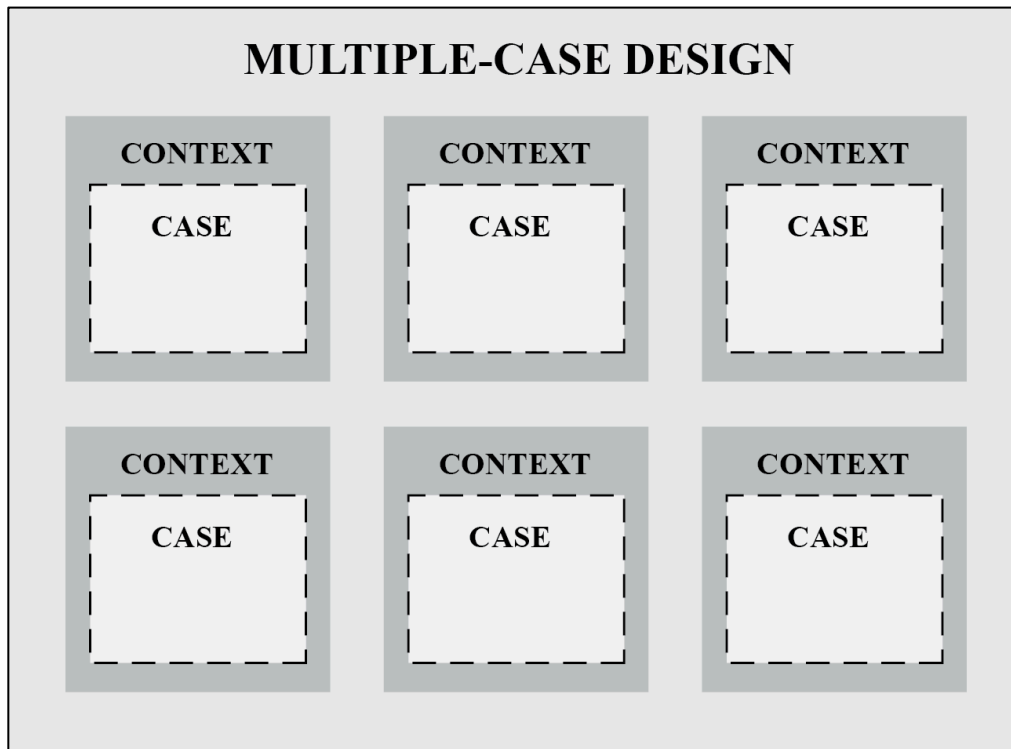


Figure 1. Multiple-case design (adapted from Yin, 2009, p.46).

This study can be further defined as a descriptive study. Merriam (1998) defines that as such:

Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study. Thick description is a term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated. (p. 30)

To ensure construct validity, the researcher has defined the concept of new media with the literature review and provided a definition of the term to participants in the online questionnaire. Because this is a descriptive study, the internal validity does not need to be tested because it does not aim to establish causal relationships. External

validity was hard to define, since this study uses a criteria based purposeful sample. As it has been highlighted before, it may be hard to generalize the findings of this research to the whole population of doctoral granting institutions in the United States based on this research study's sample. The CPED is known to include universities that are actively engaged on the critical analysis of their programs in order to improve them. Other institutions may not be engaged in such activities independently. However, according to Yin (2009):

The general way of approaching the reliability problem is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder. (p. 45)

Therefore, procedures are listed in this chapter and future researchers may reproduce this study with other samples and populations.

In addition, the use of a cross-case analysis will be employed to synthesize and aggregate the findings of all individual studies. In this case, word tables were employed to draw cross-case conclusions about the study. While Merriam (1998) argues that such analysis provides a more integrated framework for the results, Yin (2009) highlights that such cross-case synthesis methods heavily rely on the researcher's interpretation therefore the investigator must "know how to develop strong, plausible, and fair arguments that are supported by the data" (p. 160).

Data Collection Techniques

Online Questionnaire

In the initial phase of this study, the researcher used a self-developed online questionnaire (see Appendix A) containing multiple choice and open ended questions

delivered by email and with the use of the Qualtrics[®] software to gather institutions' responses (n=58) about the acceptance, rejection, or neutrality on their oppositions regarding new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences in their programs as well as the rationale for their responses. This questionnaire also helped establish the case sample (n) for the next phase of the study, the semi-structured phone interviews.

Semi-Structured Phone Interviews

Once the responses are were gathered and reviewed, the researcher, with the use of maximum variation case sampling, selected institutions (n=15) for follow up semi-structured phone interviews (see Appendix B for interview protocol) to gather more insight on the rationale for their positions. According to Creswell (2007) the maximum variation sampling “documents diverse variations and identify common patterns” (p. 127). The patterns that were targeted in this phase of this study are positions regarding the acceptance, rejection, or neutrality towards the use of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. Creswell (2007) defends the use of semi-structured phone interviews by saying that “a phone interview provides the best source of information when the researcher does not have direct access to individuals” and this was advantageous since the participants in this study were located at universities geographically located all over the United States (and any travel for this project would have to be funded by the researcher herself). The use of a semi-structured interview type was selected because the researcher wanted the participants to have the ability to develop their story while allowing the researcher to collect thick descriptive data about their perspectives, attitudes, and opinions. Merriam (1998) describes that this type of interview

has a mix of either structured or formal questions and the unstructured or informal questions. She adds that semi-structured interviews:

Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time (p. 74)

Because of the semi-structure nature of the interview and the possibility of participants developing their answers in a manner that could be difficult for the researcher to take notes, the interviews were recorded. The participants were informed that the interview was going to be recorded at the beginning of the phone call and in the consent form. The recording of the interview was done with an iPhone application called TapeACall Pro, and the researcher used Apple's Garage Band software to aid in the transcription of the interviews. All recordings and transcriptions were only monitored and reviewed by the researcher.

Document Review

Descriptive information about the institution, such as type and size, were available on the CPED website as well as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)'s data center. The researcher collect data about the participant universities to determine if there were any patterns between the type and size of the institutions and the acceptance, rejection, or undecided position about new media projects as capstone experiences for Ed.D. candidates. The researcher felt that it was important to determine if particular types of institutions (e.g. liberal arts or research based) or institutions of particular sizes (e.g. small colleges with less than three thousand students or large public institutions) display patterns of acceptance, rejection, or neutrality

regarding new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences to bring awareness to them and other institutions of the same type or size.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the researcher relied on the theoretical proposition that led to this case study. The idea behind connected learning is that it is not defined by a particular context or technology. Instead, it is defined by a set of values that guide a new philosophy of learning that might create social change. Multimodal literacy theory supports that technological advances have radically changed the way people communicate and different communication repertoires are needed in order to navigate the 21st century global digital environments. The proposition that changes in society call for a new philosophy of learning and new ways for knowledge to be disseminated was the orientation guiding this case study analysis. According to Yin (2009) theoretical orientations help focus the researcher to some data and ignore others, but more importantly, it “also helps to organize the entire case study and to define alternative explanations to be examined” (p. 130).

After the collection of responses from the online questionnaire, and the document review, the researcher focused on indicating relationships between the responses in the questionnaire (acceptance, rejection, or neutral positions regarding new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences) with the types and sizes of the institutions. While this research project had a qualitative focus, some of the data collected during document review and in the questionnaire was quantitative. The researcher employed data tabulation by constructing frequency distributions and percent distributions. For some of the data, the researcher also employed a crosstabs analysis by disaggregating the data

across multiple categories and tabulating the results across those categories. These results are displayed and discussed in Chapter Four.

For all qualitative questions, the researcher identified categories through a constant comparative method. According to Merriam (1998),

because the basic strategy of the constant comparative method is compatible with the inductive, concept-building orientation of all qualitative research, the constant-comparative method of data analysis has been adopted by many researchers who are not seeking to building substantive theory. (p. 159)

By comparing the unique responses of each of the participants, or individual cases, the researcher was able to identify patterns in their narratives. Morgan (2007) highlights that the pragmatic worldview uses the research problem to originate more knowledge about the problem. Building categories of themes that cut through the vast amount of information of data allows for the departure from basic description to the next level of analysis and understanding of data, and therefore give better understanding to the problem. Merriam (1998) emphasized: “category construction *is* data analysis” (p.180) and “categories are conceptual elements that ‘cover’ or span many individual examples of the category” (p. 182) and “should *reflect the purpose of the research*. In fact, categories are the *answers* to your research question(s)” (p. 183). This research project’s category construction started by reading individual questionnaire results and interview transcripts then writing notes, observations, and comments in those documents. After that, the researcher constantly compared the notes and annotations between all the different transcripts and identified recurring patterns that were then classified as categories and are listed in Chapter Four.

Research Permission and Ethical Considerations

Because of the nature of this project, and in compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations, a formal request for review was submitted and approved. The principal investigator has successfully completed all core modules of the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) training and qualified for the application of such request. In the application, the researcher included information about the principal investigator, details about the nature and procedures in the project, the type of review requested, as well as information about the participants and sample. Since this project involved an electronic questionnaire and a phone interview that did not request any highly personal or sensitive information from the participants an expedited review was accorded.

In order to protect the participants, an informed consent was developed, provided, and agreed upon prior to their participation stating that certain rights of the participants are guaranteed upon their agreement to participate and it included a section where they were able to acknowledge that their rights are protected. They were informed that the interviews were recorded, but that only the researcher would have access to those files. Participation in this project was anonymous by the coding of each completed questionnaire and interview and by keeping the responses confidentially stored within the Qualtrics[®] software database and the researcher's personal computer, which only the principal investigator has access to via login with a unique username and password. At the completion of this project participants were offered to receive a summary of the data similar to what it will be disseminated with all of the other consumers of that information, however it will be impossible to identify individual participants.

The Role of the Researcher

In this research project, as it is expected in qualitative research, the researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The researcher contacted the participants via email to share the link to the consent form (see APPENDIX C) and online questionnaire (see APPENDIX A) to all participants. The researcher conducted all semi-structured phone interviews and was responsible for the recording and transcription of the interview data. The researcher also monitored responses during the data collection of this project.

The researcher has more than six years of experience as an Instructional Technologist and in her current position she is responsible to guiding higher education faculty on the implementation of new technologies and new media into their classrooms with pedagogical consciousness and the application of sound instructional design. However, while the researcher acknowledges bias towards the acceptance of new media and other instructional technologies in educational settings, the researcher strived to remain neutral in the interpretation of qualitative results.

Timeline

Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	Aug 2014
Proposal	Data Collection					Write up		
IRB, gaining access, participant recruiting		Data Analysis						

Figure 2. Timeline of the Project.

Conclusion

Chapter Three provided a discussion of the research methods that were used in this project including the purpose of the study, the research questions, the case study design, the data collection methods, the data analysis methods, the research permission and ethical considerations, the role of the researcher, as well as the timeline for this project. Chapters Four and Five will include the results and the conclusion of the projects based on the data collected and analyzed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

As described in the previous chapter, the purpose of this case study was to investigate the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at participating institutions of the CPED. In the first phase of this study the researcher used a questionnaire to gather institutions' responses (n=54) about the acceptance, rejection, or undecided position about new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences in their programs as well as the rationale for their responses. To find out more about the type and classification of the participant institutions the researcher also performed document review with data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data center as well as other relevant documentation. In the second phase of this study, the researcher conducted fifteen (15) semi-structured interviews with representatives of institutions that had positions regarding the acceptance, rejection, and undecided opinions regarding the use of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. In the data collected in these semi-structured phone interviews the researcher examined the participants' professional opinions about factors that could contribute to the acceptance and rejection of such projects. In addition, the researcher also identified commonplace requirements for those Ed.D. programs in these CPED participant institutions. In this chapter, the researcher will share the overview of the responses provided in the questionnaire, the relevant information found during document

review, and the findings from the semi-structured phone interview. Concurrently, the researcher will provide the readers the preliminary interpretations of the data and how it relates to the theoretical framework and literature.

Overview of Questionnaire Results

Distribution and Response Rates

The sample population in this study was the participant institutions and programs listed at the CPED at the moment of data collection, which included 58 programs and a total of 52 institutions (n=58). The researcher contacted all program directors or contact persons that were listed in the CPED via email and their participation in this study was requested. The consent form, followed by the link to the questionnaire was included in the email (see APPENDIX C). Of the total questionnaires distributed, 32 questionnaire responses were collected (n=32) with the use of the Qualtrics software.

Upon the initial contact via email, one of the participants justified the refusal to participate in the research on his institution planning to dropping out of the CPED. Two other programs contacted were said to be “in development” and could not provide the researcher with any relevant data at that moment. The remainder non-participant institutions did not provide the researcher with any justification or reason why they would not participate even though they were contacted via email multiple (3) times.

Background of Respondents

When asked about their positions in their institutions, the majority of the participants (53%) identified themselves as both professors or associate professors as well as graduate program directors or chairs of their departments or Ed.D. programs.

Some of the participants (16%) only identified themselves as graduate program directors or chairs of their departments or Ed.D. programs and the remainder (31%) identified themselves only as professors or associate professors (Table 1). Understanding how the participants classified themselves was important to the researcher because there are questions in both the questionnaire and the interviews that required the participants' professional opinions. The majority of the participants identified themselves as both Graduate Directors and Professors therefore it is safe to conclude that the data from most of the participants included their perspective lenses of being educators as well as of being administrators and decision makers.

Table 1. Responses to Question 3 - What is your position in your institution?

Participant Response	Responses (%)	Responses (n)
Professor or Associate Professor	31%	10
Graduate Program Director	16%	5
Both	53%	17

Participant Knowledge of Institutional Capstone Regulation

The researcher asked the participant if their institutions regulated the types of capstone experiences or projects that doctoral students may choose. After tabulating the data and creating a frequency distribution the researcher was able to identify that the majority of the participants reported that their institutions did regulate the capstone experiences. Some participants reported that their institutions did not regulate the types of capstones experiences or projects that doctoral students may choose and a small minority were not sure about such institutional regulations. These results are displayed on Table 2.

Table 2. Responses to Question 4: Does your institution regulate the types of capstone experiences/projects that doctoral students may choose?

Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure
	63%	31%	6%
	(n=20)	(n=10)	(n=2)

Departmental Position on New Media Projects as Capstone Experiences

The researcher provided participants with the following definition of new media, which was constructed by the researcher herself after reviewing Manovich (2001) and Socha & Eber-Schmid (n.d.) (see APPENDIX A):

New Media are the aesthetic properties of data and the basic ways in which information is created, stored, and rendered intelligible. It can assume many forms and it evolves and morphs continuously. Formats can include: a website, a comic, a phone application, augmented reality, a wearable technology, among other formats.

After providing the participants with this definition, the researcher asked if the participants' departments would accept such projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences or projects. It is imperative to note that when referring to new media projects and alternate ways in which data is rendered intelligible the researcher did not mention the ways in which research must be conducted. Instead, just provided different modes and mediums in which knowledge and academic scholarship could be disseminated by using new media tools. Still, the majority of participants reported that they would not accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences or projects. Some of the participants were not sure if their departments would or would not accept such projects, and a small group reported that they would accept such projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences or projects. These results can be seen on Table 3.

Table 3. Responses to Question 5: Based on the following definition of *new media* - and in your professional capacity (not your personal opinion) - would your department accept a Doctor of Education *new media* capstone experience/project?

Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure
	19%	53%	28%
	(n=6)	(n=17)	(n=9)

Institutional Capstone Regulation vs. Acceptance of New Media Projects

Since the majority of the participants reported that in their universities there were institutional regulation on the types of capstone experiences or projects that doctoral students may choose, the researcher determined that a better understanding between these institutional capstone regulations and the acceptance of new media projects was needed. The researcher employed cross tabulation with frequency distribution to identify those relationships and Figure 4 illustrates them. It was found that a significant number of CPED participant institutions that regulate their capstone experiences also reported that they would not accept new media projects.

Borgman (2007) argues that in order for new digital scholarship to develop and grow the infrastructure of the scholarly environments need to change. Still these CPED participant institutions, which are in theoretically in the forefront of the discussion about capstone experiences still demonstrate some institutional pushback that inhibits them to consider new media projects as an alternative formats for capstone experiences.

According to McCarthy & Ortloff (2005) “the literature on school reform suggests that it is much easier to tinker on the perimeter of structures, rules, and practices than to bring about fundamental change” (p. 17) however, more purposeful dialogue is needed in regards to institutional regulations and the extent in which they might inhibit the exploration of new forms of scholarship and new forms of expression that employ 21st

century technologies is in order to promote the growth of more innovative scholarly environments.

Institutional Regulation	Acceptance of New Media Projects			
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
	YES	9% (n=3)	47% (n=15)	6% (n=2)
	NO	13% (n=4)	3% (n=1)	16% (n=5)
	NOT SURE	0% (n=0)	3% (n=1)	3% (n=1)

Figure 3. Relationship Between Institutional Regulations and New Media Project Acceptance.

Rationale for Acceptance of New Media as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

As it was previously discussed in this chapter, a small group of participants reported that they would accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences (see Table 3). Based on that response, they were asked to elaborate the rationale for that response through an open ended question. The researcher analyzed each case independently by writing notes and annotations about particular instances where the participant responses were meaningful. After that, the researcher used constant comparison to determine if there were patterns that emerged between all the cases. These patterns or categories were identified as: a) Open to New Ideas; and b) Each Case Would be Reviewed Independently (Table 4). As Patton (2013) highlighted, some institutions have already started making changes by providing graduate students with the opportunities of working in non-traditional dissertation and by providing them with adequate support. These changes are considerable and require a significant commitment

from the administration in order for these support systems, new-media research programs, and digital-humanities to get funding, support, and traction. Such reports seem to relate directly to the accounts from the participants that had answers in the open to new ideas category. In some of the participants' accounts they have suggested the presence of a top down push for innovation in their institution coming directly from their administration. Some of the participants have also reported that this push to new formats might provide students with multiple ways to learn, which is strongly maintained by the multimodal literacy theory.

The remainder participants reported that the decision of accepting or rejecting a new media project would have to be done on a case-to-case basis. Nonetheless, they have reported that new media projects ultimately would be accepted if the student that proposed it was able to demonstrate that such project would have an impact at a local problem. This direct impact on the field aligns with idea of action research as a signature pedagogy. The CPED's research and dialogue culminate in determining that Ed.D. graduates should be stewards of practice that will prepare them to take on the challenges of the field. Zambo's (2010) research concluded through the analysis of dissertations that action research can be used as a signature pedagogy to create school leaders who are stewards of practice and can help distinguish the Ed.D. degree from the Ph.D. degree. While new media hasn't been studied in the context of action research it could be a practical product for the educators in the field.

Table 4. Responses to Question 5.1 a) You have answered: Yes. Based on the outlined definition of new media my department would accept a Doctor of Education new media capstone experience/project. Why?

Participant Responses	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Open to New Ideas	67%	4
Each Case Would be Reviewed Independently	33%	2

Table 5. Selected Comments from Participants that Reported Acceptance of New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences in their Institutions.

Category	Participant Comment
Open to New Ideas	<p>We are open to trying multiple ways for students to learn in optimal ways. At this time we are engaging in full change including online work that has received top honors from Newsweek for the second year in a row.</p> <p>We have adopted an Alternative Format policy, which allows new media capstones.</p> <p>President X has 21st. century technology tools as a vision for all at X faculty and students.</p>
Each Case Would be Reviewed Independently	<p>The answer would not be "yes" or "no", but each case would be looked at individually. We don't have a clear process for looking at new media capstone project at this time, so any inquiries into using new media would need to go before our doctoral committee.</p> <p>For this particular program (Ed.D.), the goal is that students make their culminating project practical and applicable to the work they are doing. Therefore, if the project utilized some form of new media, and could be shown to connect to the practical/applicable framework, we would work with the student and the graduate school to make that happen.</p>

Rationale for Rejection of New Media as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

As it was previously reported in this chapter, the researcher provided the participants with the definition of new media and asked if their departments would accept such projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. The majority of participants (53%) reported

that they would not accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences or projects (see Table 3). Participants were then asked to elaborate and share the rationale for their response. After examining, annotating, and identifying the relevant points for of each of the responses, the researcher then compared all responses in order to find patterns that could emerge. Finally, the researcher was able to identify four main categories of responses that offer rationale for the participants' current rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. These categories are: a) Unfamiliarity; b) Government Sanction; and c) Traditional Dissertation Means Research Study. Selected comments from these responses can be found on Table 6.

Table 6. Responses to Question 5.1 b) You have answered: No. Based on the outlined definition of new media my department would not accept a Doctor of Education new media capstone experience/project. Why?

Participant Responses	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Unfamiliarity	53%	9
Government Sanction	24%	4
Traditional Dissertation Means Research Study	24%	4

The majority of participants reported responses grouped by the researcher in the category of unfamiliarity. In these responses participants discussed their faculty members' lack of knowledge, as well as their institutions' lack of knowledge with the concept of new media and the types of research products that new media would entail. In the core of connected learning is the idea that student learning should interest-driven and concerned with in expanding the students' educational opportunities. When a students' interest is not supported or allowed to be pursued simply because the faculty or the institution don't know a new mode of representation they are doing a disservice to the

student educational experience, even when it comes to novice academics. Novice academics are students learning the way research is conducted and the way research is disseminated. The multimodal literacy theory argues that the students of today, because of many advancements in technology and communication, have access to many other ways to display their knowledge that are not necessarily through the traditional written modes. In fact, these alternate modes could be a lot more practical for Ed.D. students because the educational doctorate programs is supposed to prepare them to be stewards of the field and these new 21st century tools could more efficiently reach out to education research's audiences.

Some participants' responses were grouped in the category of government sanction (24%). These participants reported that under their states' legislation they were not allowed to accept new media formats as capstone experiences because the only allowed model for the projects was the traditional written 5-chapter dissertation. This revelation was shocking to the researcher therefore the researcher decided to investigate that further. The pragmatic worldview as a theoretical frameworks supported such exploration because it would help the research find answers to a question (Morgan, 2007). After document review, the researcher was able to verify that in the states in which participants reported government legislative control over the capstone project it was also emphasized that a rigorous focus on applied research with a research-based doctoral dissertation - intended to improve learning in schools and community colleges - was required (the citation will be omitted in an attempt to preserve participant anonymity). Yet, in that document review the researcher never found any passages highlighting how the product of the research-based dissertation should be displayed. Such

discovery makes the acceptance of new media projects a tangible achievement once faculty and institutions are better educated about new media and its potential benefits to in directly and effectively reaching out to the field.

The remainder of the participants responses were grouped by the researcher in the category of traditional dissertation means research study. In their responses much of the participants reported that any other format would not fulfill the research requirements of the doctoral program. Selected comments from these responses can be found on Table 7. The misconception that new media would be a research methodology and not a way for displaying digital scholarship and academic knowledge was very observable in their responses. The researcher was not surprised to find that some of the participants reported that to them the traditional dissertation with its written product means - or is synonymous to - research study. Academics often require doctorate degrees for employments and often consider them as a rite of passage (Maxwell & Kupczuk-Romanczuk, 2009). As the review of the literature in Chapter Two highlighted, this format has been the demonstrative tool for display of academic scholarship and student knowledge of scientific method. The revelation that current education faculty associate this format with how things are supposed to be and expect graduate students to do the same as they have done to earn the right to move on to the next level is predictable. Yet, the theory of multimodal literacies argues against that. A graduate student or novice academic could still train in the scientific method yet use alternate documentation, such a new media projects, to provide evidence of quality therefore fulfilling the research requirements of the doctoral program.

Table 7. Selected Comments from Participants that Reported Rejection of New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences in their Institution.

Category	Participant Comment
Unfamiliarity	<p>Because our faculty do not understand research beyond the traditional, Western hegemony. They are critical if not downright ignorant of projects that are outside the five-chapter dissertation.</p> <p>Our program would not likely adopt such a dissertation format until it becomes widely accepted within the field, which I expect to be some time to come.</p>
Government Sanction	<p>The legislation governing our program and all X's in X require a traditional five-chapter dissertation.</p> <p>A better answer is not at this time. The State of X Ed Code does not allow for this, but there have been conversations about changing this or changing the interpretations. Institutional policy is modeled after the Education Code.</p> <p>According to X Education Code, our capstone experience must be a 5-chapter dissertation.</p>
Traditional Dissertation Means Research Study	<p>Our department and university continues to maintain a traditional understanding of what constitutes a capstone project at the Doctoral level. In our program, students are expected to complete a traditional dissertation. Efforts to modify or change this expectation have been met with resistance.</p> <p>The Office of Graduate Studies at X University sets the procedural requirements for doctoral degrees. To date, these requirements specify a traditional dissertation for meeting the doctoral degree research requirement.</p>

Rationale for Not Being Sure about the Acceptance of New Media as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

As it was previously reported in this chapter, 28% of the participants said that they were not sure if their departments would accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences (see Table 3). Alike to the process described for the participants that reported acceptance or rejection of new media projects by their departments, they

were asked to elaborate the rationale for their response. The researcher once again reviewed each of the responses individually, identified important facts in their reports then constantly compared with the other important facts noted from the other participants responses then ultimately identified two distinct categories: a) Lack of Demand; and b) Each Case Would be Reviewed Independently (Table 8).

Table 8. Responses to Question 5.1 c) You have answered: Not Sure. Based on the outlined definition of new media my department would not accept a Doctor of Education new media capstone experience/project. Why?

Participant Responses	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Lack of Demand	56%	5
Each Case Would be Reviewed Independently	44%	4

The majority of the participants reported that lack of demand was the reason why they were not sure if new media projects would be accepted as Ed.D capstone experiences. While some mechanisms are in place in some of those institutions to review formats for the capstone experience that are not necessarily the traditional 5-chapter dissertation, the majority reported that there hasn't been a demand for new media projects from students. As this research has previously revealed, 63% of the participants reported that there were institutional regulations regarding the capstone experiences. By cross tabulating that data with the responses of acceptance, rejection, and undecided positions about new media projects this research found that 47% of the institutions that reported institutional regulations also rejected new media projects. While more research exploring why new media projects as capstone experience are not often sought out by graduate students, these findings might suggest that the bureaucratic steps to get their new media

projects accepted and the high likelihood of these projects being denied might keep students from pursuing such projects.

The remainder participants (44%) reported that each case would have to be looked on a case to case basis and that while certain formats might not be acceptable others could if the student demonstrated that it would be relevant for a problem on the field. One of the participants' said:

Some of the examples listed (i.e., comic book, etc) do not sound like acceptable capstone experiences. However, our focus is on applied, real-world problems and if new media could be shown to be an effective means of impacting a local problem of practice it would likely be considered.

In this particular comment a new media example, the comic, is reported as not being an acceptable mode of capstone experience or expression of academic scholarship. Yet, experimentations with such forms have already been established and gained notoriety. Nick Sousanis' dissertation from Teachers College at Columbia University titled "Unflattening: a visual-verbal inquiry into learning in many dimensions" is a great example. It argues for the importance of visual thinking in teaching and learning while being entirely written and drawn in comic format. A book version of that project is set to be published by Harvard University Press in 2015 ("What Is a Dissertation?," n.d.) and excerpts can be found online at his blog (spinweaveandcut.blogspot.com). Duke and Beck (2013) argue that a traditional dissertation in education is an ungeneralizeable genre and "with an ungeneralizeable genre comes a missed opportunity for transfer of knowledge and skills that will actually be of benefit of students in the long term" (p. 32).

Jewitt (2013) argues:

Pedagogical understanding of students' mediascapes demands the adoption of strategies for engaging with the literacy world of students and their interests and desires. The theoretical and pedagogical focus of multimodalities and

multiliteracies can support teachers in engaging with the resources that students bring into the classroom. This includes understanding the students as sign maker, the texts they make as designs of meaning, and the meaning-making process that they are engaged in. These can give insights into the kinds of resources that student has accepts to (as well as those they do not). (p. 261)

Nick's literacies in visual communication were allowed by his program at Teachers College to be exploited, and this exploration of scholarly subject with a different mode of expression might provide consumers of knowledge with alternate ways of learning the content, which is very relevant for teaching and learning practitioners.

The idea the each case should be reviewed in a case-to-case basis when it comes to doctor of education capstone experiences is highly recommended by the researcher because not all students have the same literacies and because of the heterogeneity of the field. Some students, like Sousanis did have the knowledge and literacies to pursue a project with a comic format. Others do not. However, other students may have different literacies that would support sharing their scholarship in a different way. Another important point is that while doctor of education students might have the same area of study as a major (e.g.: Curriculum and Instruction) they might have completely different sub-areas of focus (e.g.: Kinesiology or Instructional Technology). And while the exploration of new modes of scholarship would be beneficial in all areas of scholarship, to some majors they would might be more applicable then others. Yet, they would be worth exploring how a student's personal interest and multiliteracies, when capitalized in their capstone experiences, would address problems in the field. Additional selected responses from the participants that were not sure about accepting new media projects can be found on Table 9.

Table 9. Selected Comments from Participants that Reported Being Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences in their Institution.

Category	Participant Comment
Lack of Demand	<p>I am thinking that we would also consider other media formats but none have been proposed at this time.</p> <p>I am not sure because I don't know if anyone has attempted this.</p> <p>If a student, school, or school district has an interest in conducting research on new media we certainly would entertain the possibility.</p>
Each Case Would be reviewed Independently	<p>If the final product was solely the new media project, we would not accept it. However, if this were one part of a larger research endeavor (including its contribution to practice, research, and a demonstration of mastery of the related literature/artifact), this would be something we would consider.</p> <p>We have approved an alternative format dissertation, which is made up of three products with an introduction that introduces and frames the products and a conclusion. Although we haven't excluded anything specific from the list of acceptable products, none of your examples are included on the list and I'm skeptical that they would be accepted. They would present questions of rigor.</p>

Overview of Document Analysis

The researcher aimed to determine if patterns existed between the type, size, or classification of institutions that accepted, rejected, or that were undecided about new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. To achieve such target, the researcher reviewed the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the CPED's website to find more about the participant institutions in study and analyzed in juxtaposition to the questionnaire responses. Since all of the data acquired by document analysis and these particular questionnaire results was quantitative, the researcher tabulated the results and organized them by frequency and percent distributions. In this

next session you will find the summary of results of the analysis and graphic representations of these findings.

Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

The researcher identified all participants that reported that new media projects would not be accepted as an Ed.D. capstone experience. Following, the researcher tabulated those responses against those institutions' Carnegie Classifications, 12-month enrollment total, and Sector. The majority of them were classified (Carnegie Classification) as Research Universities (n=13). Two subcategories were found under the Research University classification and 35% were classified as having high research activity (n=6) and 41% were classified as having very high research activity (n=7). The others (24% or n=4) were classified as Master's Colleges & Universities (larger programs) (Figure 5). These results reflected that research institutions are likely to reject new media projects when proposed as an alternative capstone experiences. These results were expected by the researcher because research institutions are expected to produce more scholarly work and this research project has illustrated that currently new media is yet to be considered by the majority of the participants as an acceptable product for capstone experiences. When it comes to the Sector classification, all of the institutions that currently reject new media projects are classified as Sector Public, 4-year or above (Table 10). The 12-month enrollment Total data found in the document analysis showed that the majority of the participants that reported that they would not accept new media projects as capstone experiences (47%) were institutions that had between 30 and 45 thousand students (n=8) followed by (29%) institutions that had between 15 and 30 thousand students (n=5). Institutions with less than 15 thousand students composed a smaller (12%) number (n=2),

and the ones that had between 45 and 60 thousand students and more than 60 thousand students represented even smaller numbers (both were 6% or n=1) respectively (Figure 6).

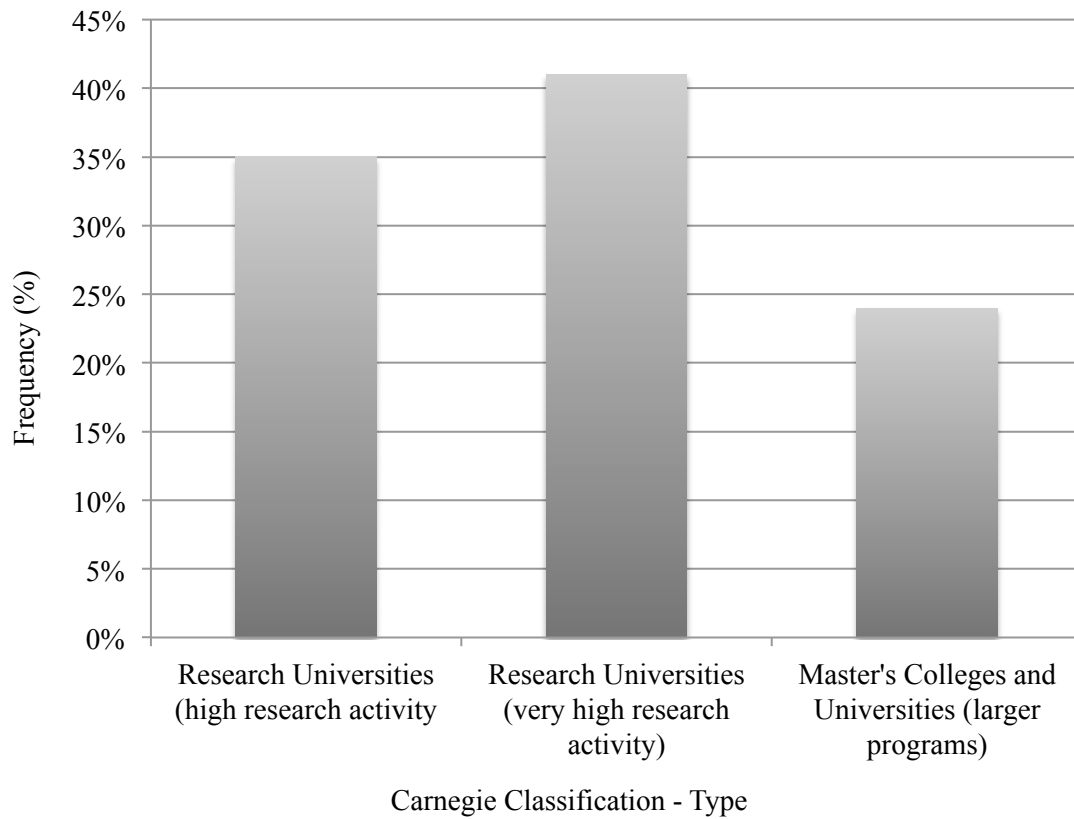


Figure 4. Types of Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.

Table 10. Carnegie Classification of Institution by Sector - Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.

Sector Type	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Public, 4-year or above	100%	17

Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

Similarly to the procedures outlined in the last section, the researcher identified the participants that reported that they would accept new media projects as Ed.D.

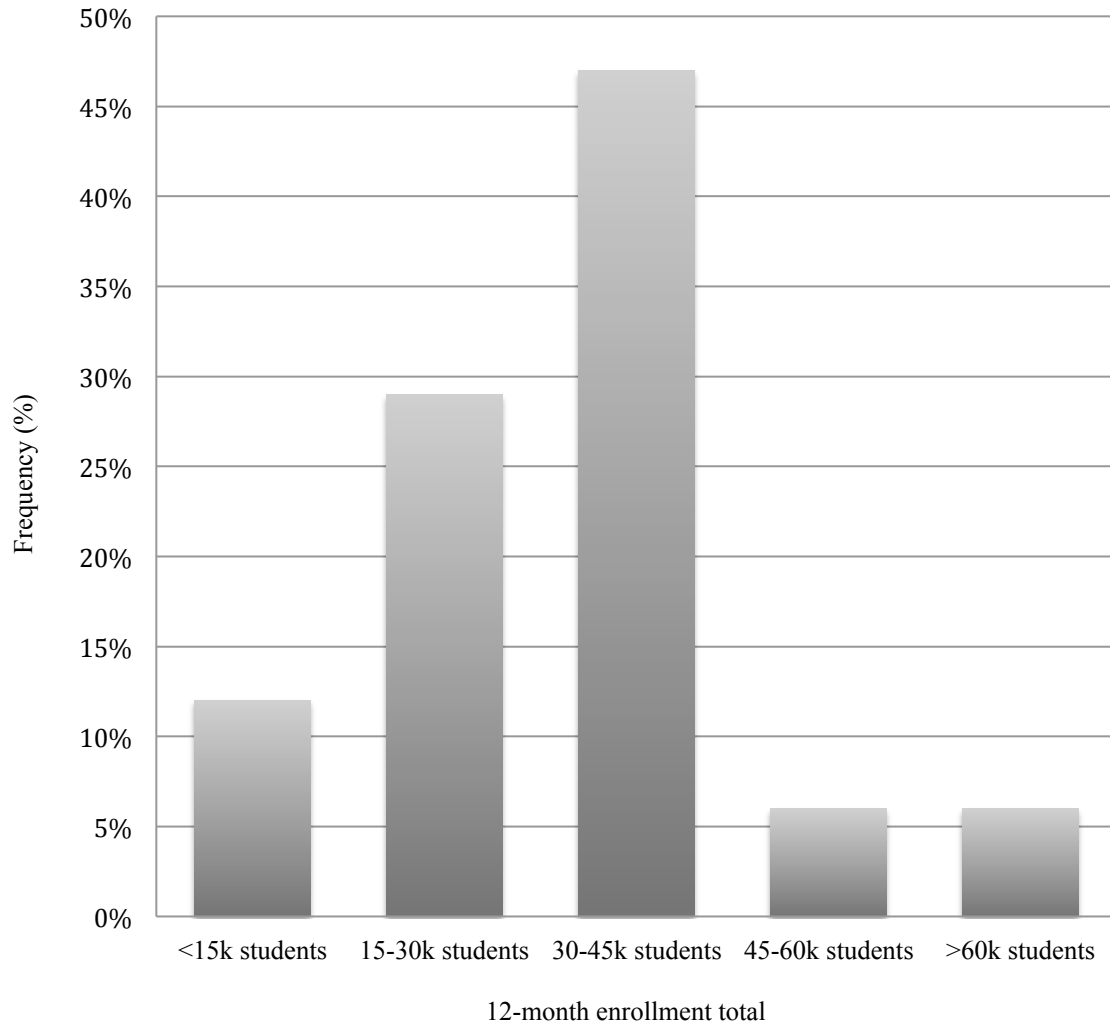


Figure 5. 12-month Enrollment Analysis for Institutions that Reject New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

capstone experiences. The researcher tabulated those responses against those institutions' Carnegie Classifications, 12-month enrollment total, and Sector. Figure 6 illustrates the percent distribution of each of the types of institutions identified in the document review. The researcher was surprised to identify that the majority of universities that currently

accept new media projects were classified as Research Universities (83%). Within that classification, it was found that 33% of them were classified as being of high research activity (n=2), 33% were classified as Doctoral/Research Universities (n=2), and 17% were classified as very high research activity (n=1). Only 17% of the institutions were classified as Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs) (n=1). When these results were compared to the population that rejected new media projects, which also had a majority of participants classified research institutions the researcher started recognizing that there might be a pattern based on the types of institutions that are involved in the CPED project. As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, these institutions are engaged in dialogue and inquiry in order to better their doctor of education programs. They are trying to research, collectively, better signature pedagogies, processes, and procedures that can make their programs more relevant in the field of education. In short, they are researchers. The CPED participants were selected through a criteria based purposeful sampling process, which as Creswell (2007) argues is often used for qualitative research studies. Therefore these results might not be generalizable and representative of all populations of United States doctor of education degree granting institutions (as highlighted on Chapter One). Nevertheless, the researcher found that half of these institutions were classified based on the Sector as Private not-for-profit (50%), and the other half (50%) were classified as Public, 4-year or above (Table 11) which presented a distinction in comparison to the institutions that rejected new media projects, which were 100% Public, 4-year or above institutions.

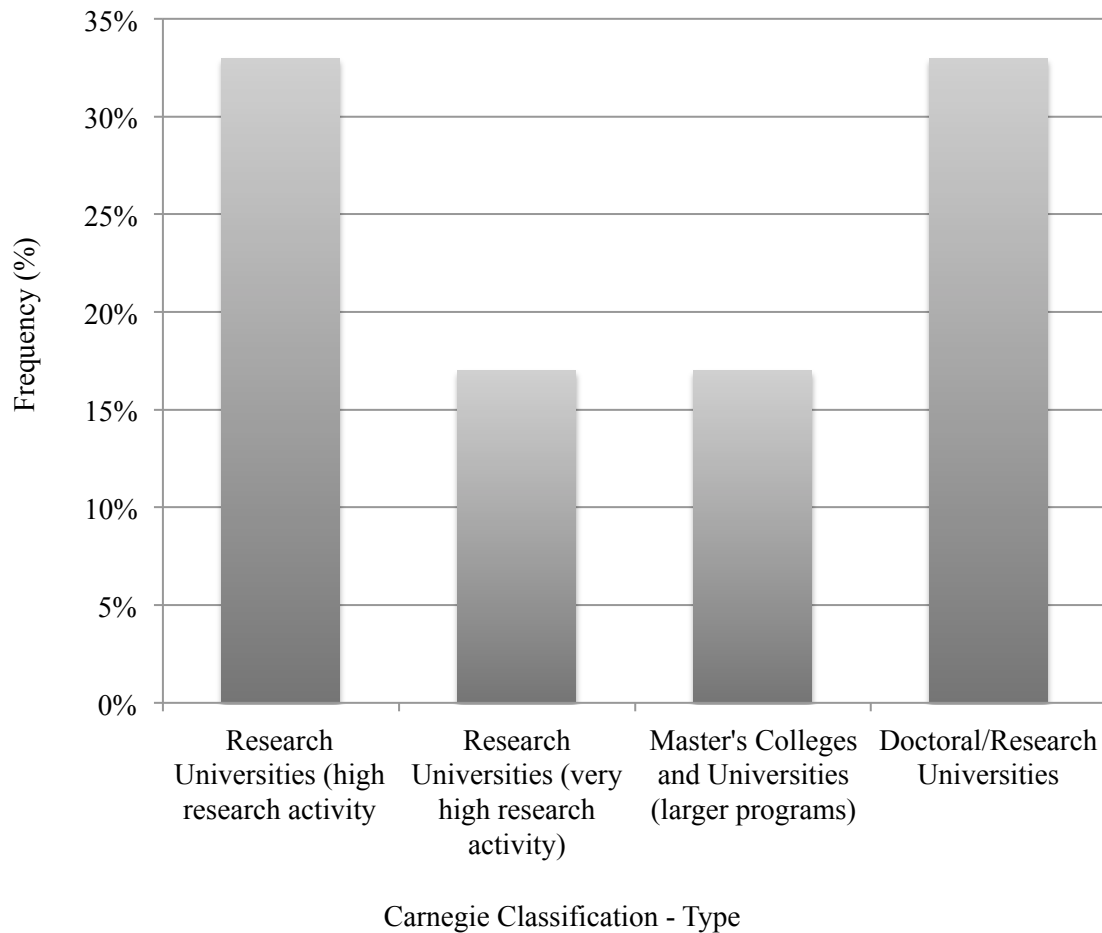


Figure 6. Types of Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.

Table 11. Carnegie Classification of Institution by Sector - Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

Sector Type	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Private not-for-profit	50%	3
Public, 4-year or above	50%	3

The 12-month enrollment Total analysis showed that the same number of institutions (33% or n=2) had 15 thousand or less, between 15 and 30 thousand, and between 30 and 45 thousand students (Figure 8). These results seem consistent with

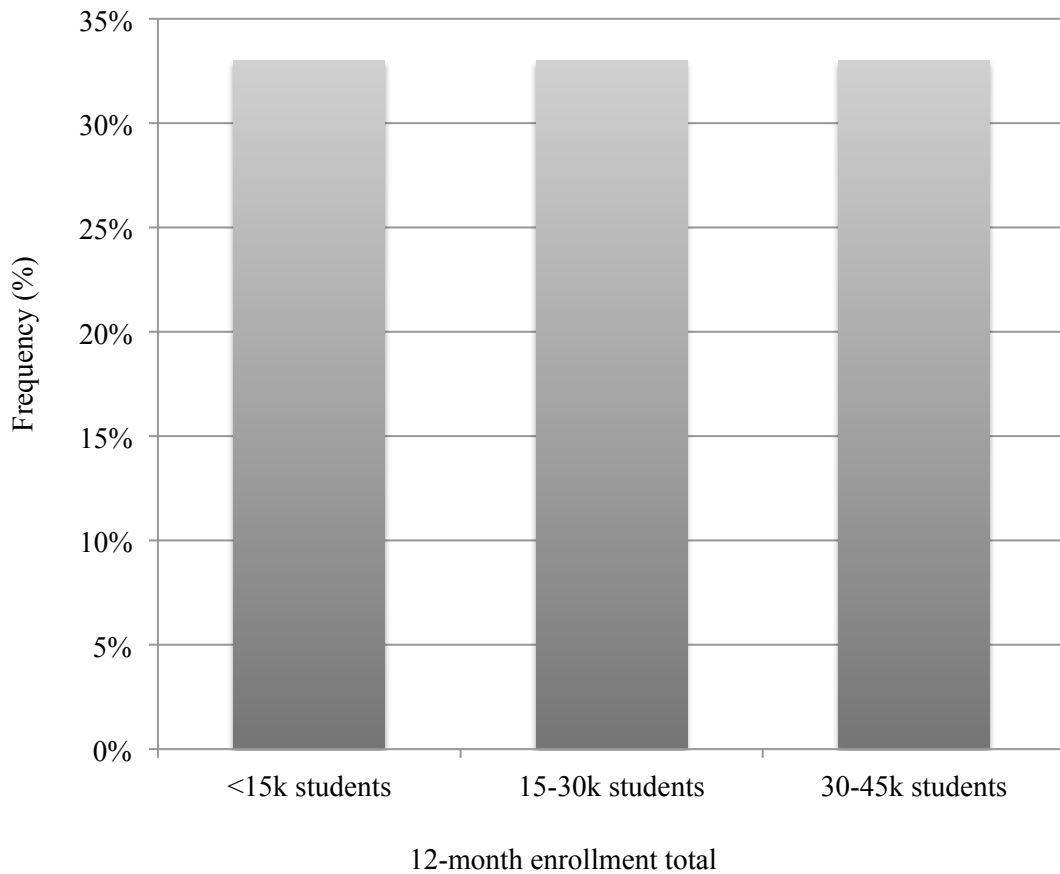


Figure 7. 12-month Enrollment Analysis for Institutions that Accept New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

the results from the institutions that rejected new media projects. This also might be a brought forth by the type of institutions that are interested in being part of the CPED program.

Institutions Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

Figure 9 illustrates that all the institutions that reported that they were not sure if they would accept new media projects as capstone experiences were classified as Research Universities, yet the majority (78%) was sub-categorized as very high research activity (n=7) while the minority (22%) was sub-categorized as high research activity

(n=2). These results substantiate that most of the participants that are CPED members and that participated in this study are research institutions. Therefore these results are not generalizable.

Table 12 shows that almost all of the institutions (89%) were classified as Public, 4-year or above (n=8), while the others (11%) were classified as Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above (n=1). These results are once again consistent with the classifications from the institutions that both rejected and accepted new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. The 12-month enrollment total for these participants showed that a lot of them (45%) had between 15 and 30 thousand students, while others (33%) had between 30 and 45 thousand students, and finally the remainder (22%) had more than 60 thousands students (Figure 10). Finally, these results are once again consistent with the results reported by the institutions that currently reject and accept new media projects. It was identified that the majority of CPED institutions that participated in this study are classified as research institutions, the majority of them are either classified as Public, 4-year or above or Private not-for-profit and the number of students enrolled was not very diverse. The results then are not generalizable and additional research with different Ed.D. granting universities that are not part of the CPED is recommended.

Table 12. Carnegie Classification of Institution by Sector - Institutions that are Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

Sector Type	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Private not-for-profit	11%	1
Public, 4-year or above	89%	8

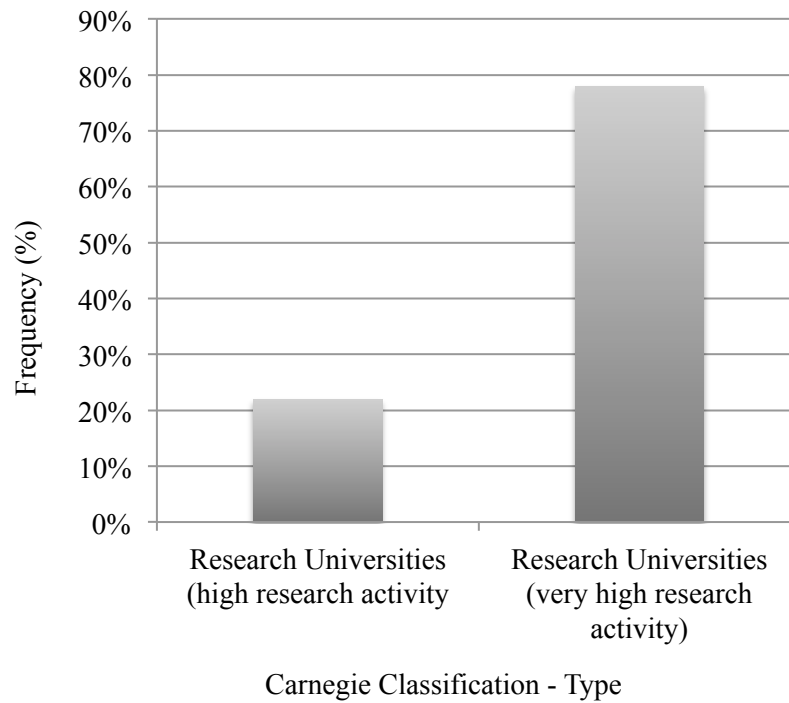


Figure 8. Types of Institutions Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.

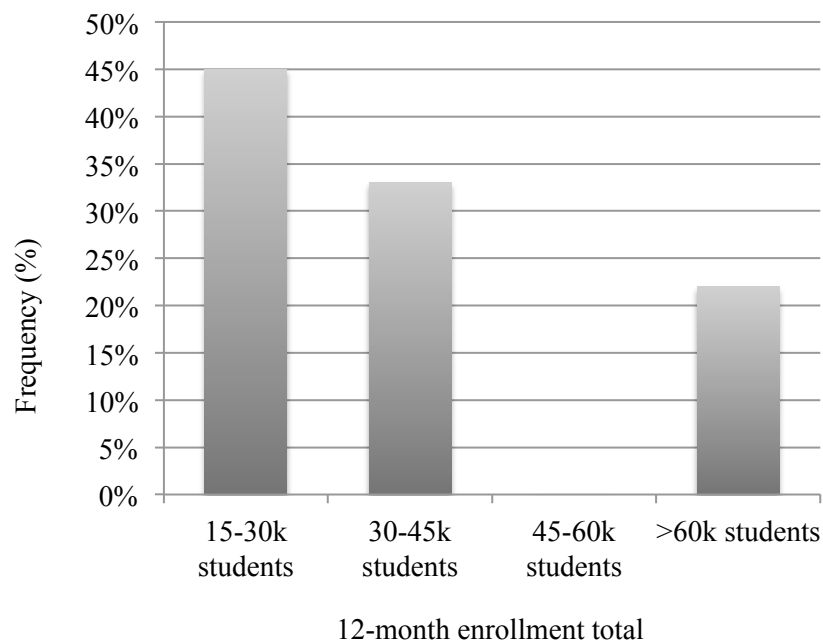


Figure 9. 12-month Enrollment Analysis for Institutions Not Sure about New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences.

Overview of Phone Interview Results

Distribution and Response Rates

For the semi-structure interview phase of this research project 15 institutions (n=15) were selected with the use of a randomized maximum variation case sampling to proportionally represent the responses gathered in the online questionnaire.

All of the participants were notified of their selection by email and asked to schedule a phone interview at their earliest convenience. From those selected participants, 4 did not respond back with a date for a phone interview. Therefore, the researcher selected 4 more participants (once again, randomly) that fit the proportions of questionnaire answers.

Consistently with the numbers that were reported in the questionnaire responses, these the majority (53% or n=10) of the selected participants reported that they would not accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences or projects. Some of the participants (28% or n=3) were undecided about the acceptance such projects, and a small group (19% or n=2) reported that they would accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences (Table 13).

Table 13. Phase 2 Institutions' Responses to Questionnaire Question 5: Based on the following definition of *new media* - and in your professional capacity (not your personal opinion) - would your department accept a Doctor of Education *new media* capstone experience/project?

Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure
	19% (n=2)	53% (n=10)	28% (n=3)

Reported Department Requirements for Ed.D. Capstone Experiences

The researcher asked the participants about the requirements for the Ed.D. capstone experiences in their programs. After transcribing each of the transcribed interviews the researcher was able to identify important points and ideas in each of them. After reviewing each of these annotated important points and mentions the researcher compared all of them and was able to identify five distinct categories of reported capstone requirements: traditional embedded, traditional not-embedded, quasi-traditional embedded, and not defined. The classification *traditional* was mentioned by many of the participants and consistently denoted the most common definition of the dissertation format, which includes: the selection of a committee with a mentor; the development of a three-chapter proposal; an oral defense in front of the committee; IRB proposal; data collection; data analysis; the development of two more chapters; a final oral defense in front of the committee. The classification *quasi-traditional* was created in reference to models that mirror the traditional format, but include non-traditional aspects to the project. *Embedded* refers to the programs that require students to be enrolled in certain courses in order for the student to work on their capstone project (e.g. the review of the literature, the methodology). *Not embedded* refers to those programs that do not require a student to be in enrolled in a specific class to work on any part of their capstone project. Some participants reported that the format or requirement is *not defined* therefore could take any form. Table 14 displays a summary of the participants' responses. These results are important because of the current literature on the education doctorate includes making greater distinctions between the Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs (Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen, 2012). Ed.D. is considered a professional degree and traditionally, professional degrees

are intended to be completed in a fixed period of time. Having the dissertation embedded into a program would assist students into a more systematic development of their capstone project and possibly the conclusion of the project in a timely manner. In addition, having the development of this project being done as a course while other peers are also developing their projects would capitalize on the connected learning vision of peer support as part of the support system that enable students to have better educational environments.

Table 14. Reported Department Requirements for Dissertation Development

Participant Responses	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Traditional, not-embedded	53%	8
Traditional, embedded	20%	3
Quasi-traditional, embedded	13%	2
Not defined	13%	2

Student Choice on Mentor and Committee

All of the participants mentioned that doctoral students work with a mentor and a committee however, student choice on determining who that mentor and committee differed between participant responses. After analyzing those responses, the researcher found that 27% of the participating programs allow for students to choose their both their mentor and have input in their committee selection. 7% reported that while students had a choice on identifying their mentor, they did not have a choice on the selection of their committee members. 20% reported that while students did not have the choice to select their mentor, they did have a chance to input their opinions on the selection of their committee. 27% reported that the students had no choice on the selection of neither

mentor nor committee members. 20% (n=3) did not mention in their phone interviews if students had a choice or not in this matter (Figure 11).

These results were very alarming to the researcher. 47% of the participants said that the student had no choice in deciding which mentor they would work with for their capstone experiences even though they were required to have one. Connected learning supports an environment for the student to flourish with a strong mentor and peer support and supports the use of the new media tools to aid in the educational experience. When it comes to the experiences of doctoral students and novice academics that relationship is also true. When studying doctoral attrition, Golde (2000) highlights that previous research in doctoral education revealed the importance of integration between academic and social systems. In fact he highlights that “the relationships with faculty advisors consistently seem more important in doctoral students completion then relationships with peers” (p. 202). Student choice in the mentor that will help them navigate the academic system and will provide support in the process of the capstone experience could highly benefit a student that is trying to complete a professional degree.

		Student Choice on Committee	
Student Choice on Mentor		YES	NO
	YES	27% (n=4)	7% (n=1)
	NO	20% (n=3)	27% (n=4)

Figure 10. Relationship Between Reported Student Choice on Dissertation Committee and Student Choice on Dissertation Mentor.

Departmental Policies Regarding Capstone Experiences

The researcher asked participants about departmental policies regarding capstone experiences (Table 15). By tabulating the results the researcher found that the majority of the participants (53%) reported that their programs had full autonomy over they policies of their program. Some of them (33%) reported that while they have some control over their program, but the department (school or college of education) still has some control over capstone experience requirements and policies. Finally, a small number of them (13%) reported that they were not sure to what extent the department policies affected the capstone experience process in their programs.

Table 15. Reported Department Policies Regarding Capstone Experiences

Participant Responses	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
Program has full autonomy	53%	8
Program has some control	33%	5
Not Sure	13%	2

Reported Institutional Regulations

As it was previously mentioned in this chapter, the selection of participants for the semi-structured phone interview phase of this research project was done through randomized maximum variation case sampling to proportionally represent the responses in the online questionnaire. From the selected participants in this phase of the study the majority (73%) reported that there were institutional regulations regarding capstone experiences in their universities. The same number was reported for the institutions that reported that there were no institution regulations on capstone experiences (13%) and the ones that were not sure if there were institutional regulations for capstone experiences (13%) (Table 16).

The analysis between the presence of institutional regulations and participants positions of acceptance, rejection, and neutrality over new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences revealed that when institutional regulations are present, a high

Table 16. Reported Institutional Regulation from Participants in Phase 2 of the Study

Participant Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure
Institutional Regulations	73% (n=11)	13% (n=2)	13% (n=2)

number of institutions are likely to reject new media projects. Yet, the majority of participants in this phase of the study revealed that their programs have full autonomy over the capstone experiences of the students in their programs. These results are confounding and suggest that institutional regulations overthrow departmental policies in relation to capstone experiences even though the programs have more detailed understanding about the needs of their fields and the learning needs of their students.

After being asked if there were institutional regulations about capstone experiences in their universities the participants also described ways in which these policies and regulations relate to the capstone experience. These results were very similar to one another and the researcher did not need to constantly compare the reports to identify categories that emerged between them. Instead, the researcher simply tabulated the data and found that 100% of them enforced institutional regulations regarding the Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission and ethical considerations of research with participants. It was also found that most of the participants (53%) reported that institutional regulations refer simply to aesthetic formatting requirements (e.g. document margins, title formatting, etc.). Some (33%) reported that the institutional regulations

relate to the content and product of the capstone experiences, and a very small number (7%) reported that there were no institutional regulations of any kind regarding capstone experiences. The same number was also reported (7%) by participants that were not sure if there were any institutional regulations in their university (Table 17).

Table 17. Types of Institutional Regulation Reported by Participants in Phase 2 of the Study

Participant Responses	Reponses (%)	Responses (n)
IRB	100%	15
Aesthetic Formatting	53%	8
Content and product	33%	5
There are no regulations	7%	1
Not sure about regulations	7%	1

The study has found that institutional regulations are likely to overthrow departmental regulations regarding the capstone experiences, even though most participants' departments reported have full autonomy over such capstone experiences. Yet, the majority of the participants reported that these institution regulations refer to aesthetic formatting of the capstone experiences, which suggests that aesthetic formatting of written capstone experiences might be the reason why new media project are still not commonly accepted as a format for dissemination of scholarship in the case of doctor of education capstone experiences.

The previous insight was noteworthy to the researcher. The aesthetic formatting of a written project, more than the content or product of the projects, have significantly influenced the rejection of a particular mode of scholarship dissemination. As it was discussed in Chapters One and Two, the communication age sparked a time where many people are allowed publish online. The web, while being a great environment to consume

information, became an environment riddled with information that might not be reliable. The capstone experiences of doctoral candidates are guided by mentors and committee members and are intended to train the student to conduct research that will contribute to the new body of knowledge in the field. In the field of education, in particular, the scholarship that can solve problems in the field is highly recommended. Yet, new media projects, which could provide students with platform to work on their personal interests using the literacies that are familiar to them while being able to more purposefully reach out to practitioners on the field, are not widely accepted.

Reported Factors Influencing the Acceptance and Rejection of New Media Project

The realization reported in the previous section made it a lot more important for the researcher to identify, from the analysis of professional opinion of the participants, the factors that might influence the acceptance or the rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. The participants' responses were collected, transcribed, then the researcher analyzed each transcribed response or case individually to identify important and noteworthy points in each of them. Following that step, the researcher constantly compared the notes of each of the cases with the others to identify patterns that could emerge. The examination of the phone interviews was fascinating and gave the researcher much greater understanding of faculty perceptions about new media and the steps needed in the future in order for new media products to be accepted. As it was highlighted in the previous chapters, connected learning and the multimodal literacy theory support the proposition that changes in society call for a new philosophy of learning based on the technological advances of the past decades and these advances also call for ways for scholarly, reliable, and peer reviewed knowledge to be disseminated.

Therefore, understanding the factors that might facilitate new media projects to be accepted was very important and could contribute to the educational research in the field of education and more practically would assist educators and administrators on supporting such projects.

Except for one particular instance where a participant reported that in “absolutely no way” a new media project would be accepted, the analysis of the results identified three main categories of responses or factors that could influence the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstones experiences. These are: a) Demonstration of Rigor; b) Faculty Advocacy; and c) Embedded in Traditional Format. The researcher followed the same data analysis steps to identify the category of responses or factors that could influence the rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstones experiences. These are: a) Perceived Lack of Rigor; and b) Does not fit the Traditional Model.

The Question of Rigor

As the last section has highlighted the participants’ positions that were organized in the categories that included rigor prevailed considerably when discussing the factors that might influence the acceptance and rejection of new media projects. In the questionnaire data analysis, the researcher found that the idea of rigor was also highly mentioned. Yet, the researcher has interpreted that when talking about new media projects the participants did not think of new media as a novel way to disseminate scholarship. Instead, they perceived new media projects as being an alternate research methodology altogether. In the analysis of the phone interviews the views of the participants in regards to rigor and new media projects’ acceptance or rejection were

slightly different, but still resonated with the perceptions found in phase one of the study.

One of the participants said:

You need to be adding to the body of knowledge, you have to establish that there is a need for whatever particular question that you happen to choose or project or whatever it happens to be and you would have to be able to justify that in terms of the current literature.

Another said:

you know, you've got to show some rigor, you've got to show more than just telling stories, you've got to show that this is meaningful stuff and attaches to the literature and it attaches to methodology and theory.

Those assumptions are not wrong. The argument for the new media projects is not that they provide with an easy route to the traditional cumbersome work of conducting a research study. And yes, a capstone experience should be meaningful and should be justifiable by the goals of the program and the literature. What is erroneous is to think that data, if only reported in the traditional written mode, is the only way to do a rigorous project. Once again, the multimodal literacies theory supports that an educational environment is more optimal when the students' literacies and interests are capitalized on and when their mentors and peers support them.

Regarding the factors that could influence the rejection of new media projects a participant added:

I think that there is plenty of people in my college and in the school of education that would be probably accepting of it, but if it got rejected would be because they would feel that it wasn't rigorous enough or it didn't follow the tradition that was necessary.

Another said:

Well again, if the student product doesn't meet the criteria of internal coherence. Is it a research question that matters? Is it the data that was collected? Does the data collection seem appropriate for the questions that have been asked? Now, the

data could be anything I think. My university would be very open to different types of data.

That also resonates with the findings from the questionnaire data. Some suggested that a rubric for expectations could benefit the acceptance of new media projects and the establishment of rigor. Another mentioned the quality of the project:

I think that if they were high quality and their value was demonstrable and obvious I think that is going to be a key factor. I think we are going to get a lot of push back though from the more traditional academic programs when we go away from the traditional dissertation.

The meaning of the construct rigor for all participants seems to differ. Some mentioned rigor as it refers to a project aligning to the benchmarks of the program, some referred to it as being through in the methodology of reviewing the literature, and others referred to the way a novice academic would conduct and report research. The construct of rigor when it comes to capstone experiences is definitely unclear at this point.

However unclear the construct of rigor was, a few of the participants thought of the idea of rigor very drastically and demonstrated a rather narrow view towards novice academics and their possible impact in the academic. For instance, one of the participants reported:

A doctoral researcher is a novice research and they are not professionals. It's like having a college football player out of a professional playing field and sticking him out there having only college level experience and putting him on the starting line-up for the San Francisco 49ers in the Super Bowl. How is that college player going to perform? And if we put in somebody like that, who is a novice scholar and who is in the first stages of becoming a scholar (whether he is a scholarly practitioner or an academic scholar, which are different), they are not meant to be there developing new theory that is going to have new impact on the world and change the world.

He continued by saying “look, you can look back at the doctoral work of people like Darwin, or Freud, or any of the great thinkers, but it is not the intention.” He then mentioned this very project’s researcher’s efforts by saying:

Your hope is that your research is going to become great! But it is like sticking you in football field or to be starting in the starting line up of a professional basketball team or whatever and you are typically not ready for that as a doctoral student. And so what is going to inhibit new forms of media for a capstone project is that for some it has to meet a standard of rigor that needs to be approved by peers, the academic community.

That was not very encouraging. Novice academics should then prove that their project will be meaningful, yet they might not be perceived as rigorous researchers and the alternate products or ways in which they disseminate their finds might not be accepted because they might be perceived as pompous or self-important when capitalizing on their multimodal literacies. That is a big challenge and contrast significantly the proposition brought forth by the theoretical frameworks that guided this study.

Finally, an additional participant said:

If we aim to be a transformational program as related to our program’s learning objectives and if the student can demonstrate if their means or approach to the capstone experience will help them achieve those at a level that is equal to our current process or better, than by all means, we would accept that.

Such vision was heartening and aligns with the theoretical frameworks because it fosters educational environments where the student and novice scholar can experiment with new modes of expression and perhaps advance how scholarship is conducted and how educational research is disseminated.

Faculty Advocacy

Faculty advocacy was another category that emerged from the data analysis as a factor that can influence the acceptance of new media projects. As it was previously mentioned faculty can play a big role in doctoral student retention (Golde, 2000) and the connected learning educational environment. One participant reported:

The advisor or mentor of the doctoral student would be the first point of clarity and they would be the person to guide them to begin with, but then I think they would use their committee and the people they select to be in the committee would have to be people that understand and can further this particular kind of new media type project. So it is a good question of whether a faculty would have that type of expertise to be able to call on that and would be interested in that particular kind of project - not only the technological expertise, but also the interest in that particular research or whatever it happens to be.

A problem exists with that point of view. This study found that 47% of the participants reported that students in their program do not have choice in the mentor that will guide them through their capstone experiences. Yet, having a stronger voice in that decision process could allow students that are interested in pursuing such projects to select the faculty members that could then advocate for them. Giving the choice to the student to select a mentor with similar interests and literacies would also be important. A participant supported that by saying:

So it is a good question of whether a faculty would have that type of expertise to be able to call on that and would be interested in that particular kind of project - not only the technological expertise, but also the interest in that particular research or whatever it happens to be.

In another statement that supports the assumption that graduate students should have greater abilities to select their mentors, a participant highlighted that in his personal opinion he believed that experienced faculty or faculty with good reputations in the

school and the university would be able to more easily cut through the bureaucracy needed for new media projects to be accepted:

Someone like myself as a new person certainly have less credibility to try to push that through than someone that is a full ranking professor who would say “hey this is something we should do.” A think a lot of it would have to do with it. It would get a bigger audience if the professor involved had pretty high status.

It Doesn't Fit the Traditional Model

One participant said:

I think that one of the biggest obstacles, at least where I am, for doing new media or anything that is more innovative is a traditional mindset of what the Ed.D. is supposed to be or any doctoral degree and what it is supposed to be as opposed to what it could be.

The researcher was very saddened to identify this category in the data analysis of the participants' responses. Many of them reported that new media projects are likely to be rejected because simply they do not fit the model that has been done over and over again. That is consistent with the literature and several authors have argued against that for years (Ayers, 2013; Duke & Beck, 1999; Hancock, 1991). However, academia is a fertile ground for the exploration of new modes of expression and the justification that something shouldn't be done because it just not fit the traditional model should not be an option. Another participant said:

I think it is because it is a break of tradition. The doctorate dissertation has always been the rite of passage so to speak for a doctorate. I think that for the people that have gone through the traditional program – and I am older, I'm 68 years old, and so I tend to be more traditional. I am sort of coming in to the new era with a little bit of trepidation, but I can see where there will be those who say: “I did mine, people got do theirs too” maybe it is sort of the hazing process (...) And my concern is that if we don't put them through a rigorous research process and programs of study when they go into the professorate

That is consistent with the results from the questionnaire data analysis. The dissertation is viewed as rite of passage, a passport into a professional field that requires students to go through the same processes in which their elders have done through. Yet, 21st century students live in a completely different world that provide them with tools that were never before available to them. Inhibiting students to explores new ways to communicate academic scholarship because it does not fit the mold is deplorable.

It Doesn't Fit the Traditional Model, but We Might Embed into It

While the *Does Not Fit the Traditional Model* has emerged in the analysis of data of reported factors that might influence the rejection of new media projects, the category *Embedded in Traditional Format* emerged when analyzing the reported factors that might influence the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. One participant said:

For example, we have students using this thing called “photovoice” where the participant takes the images and uploads the comments in the data collection part. (...) it gets plugged into the traditional looking dissertation as part of the data collection.

Another participant reported:

What we have done within our program is two options that we have worked with students to have something like this maybe able to happen. One is that materials could be submitted as an appendix to the dissertation.

Both of these exemplify the reluctance that might still exist when trying alternative ways for the capstone experiences. The idea that a new mode could be accepted when embedded into a format that is currently widely accepted does not transform scholarly environments and does not address the demands of 21st students. More profound changes are needed in order to provide novice academics with new environments for

experimentation while under the guidance of the mentorship of more experienced academics.

Conclusion

Chapter Four highlighted the data analysis techniques used in this study as well as the themes and categories that emerged from the interpretation of the data. The data analysis suggests that the majority of CPED institutions reject new media projects as part of their Ed.D. capstone experiences. The majority of the participants reported that there were institutional regulations regarding capstone experiences in their universities and a strong relationship was found between the presence of institutional regulation of capstone experiences and departmental rejection of new media projects as capstone experiences. From the institutions that currently accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences it was found that a lot of them were open to new ideas, and a top down emphasis on the development of 21st practices was emphasized, which shows that the administration might have significant impact on new media projects being accepted. From the participants that currently reject new media projects, faculty and institutional unfamiliarity with new media projects emerged as a category for the justification of rejection of new media projects even though connected learning and multimodal literacy theory support that the students' literacies should be capitalized on to pursue their self-interests. The analysis of responses from institutions that are currently are not sure about new media projects Ed.D. capstone experiences resulted in identifying that the lack of demand was one the reason they have not discussed more deeply about it, yet the bureaucracy required to pursue these projects might keep students from considering them. One strong contradiction that was found through the analysis of the data was that while

the majority of participants reported institutional regulations regarding the capstone experiences, the majority of them still reported that their programs have full autonomy over their capstone experiences from the doctoral students in their departments. IRB approval is still the biggest type of institutional regulation followed by aesthetic formatting. Responses also suggested that factors influencing the acceptance of new media might be related to questions of rigor, faculty advocacy, and some initial embedding into a traditional format; while factors influencing the rejection of new media projects relate to the perceived lack of rigor as well as it does not currently fit the traditional model. Chapter Five will discuss the data analysis, the findings and interpretations, the limitations and recommendations, as well as implications of these results.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences, and also to understand the rationale for the acceptance, rejection, or undecided positions about it. This research project addresses a need for research in graduate education that does not focus on attrition, persistence, job placement, time-to-degree, or the preparation the doctoral students receive as prospective faculty members (Gaff, 2002; Gardner, 2004; Geiger, 1997; Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000; Nyquist et al., 1999). Many authors have argued that a traditional dissertation, because of its form and reachability, does not meet the needs for education research and the capstone experiences of doctor of education students (Ayers, 2013; Duke & Beck, 1999; Hancock, 1991). Multimodal literacy theory and connected learning, the main theoretical frameworks that guided this study, support those authors' claims and support the proposition that that changes in society call for a new philosophy of learning and new ways for knowledge to be disseminated. Determining the current state of acceptance of new media projects as well as the factors that can influence the acceptance and rejection of such projects allowed me to have a better understanding of the problem, and made it possible for me to make more informed suggestions and recommendations regarding the problem.

The findings from this study were identified by analyzing data collected with thirty-two online questionnaires, fifteen semi-structured phone interviews, and relevant document review. The data collected in the online questionnaire intended to answer the first and second research questions, which were: (1) What is the current state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at CPED participating programs? What are the participants' rationale for their positions? And (2) What are the patterns between the type and size of the institutions and the acceptance, rejection, or undecided position about new media projects as capstone experiences for Ed.D. candidates? Through the analysis of the data from the online questionnaire as well as document review, I was able to answer those questions. Additionally, through the analysis of the data in the semi-structured interviews I was able to distinguish the answers to the remainder research questions, which were: (3) What are the most common requirements for capstone experiences at CPED institutions' Ed.D. programs? And (4) What factors do CPED institutions' participants perceive as pertinent in the acceptance and rejection of new media projects as capstone experiences in Ed.D. programs? In the next section, the responses for each the research questions will be summarized and discussed.

Findings and Interpretations

First Research Question

The Current State of Acceptance of New Media Projects. The first research question was aimed to determine the current state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at CPED participating programs and the participant's

rationale for their positions. By tabulating the questionnaire results and creating percent distributions I was able to identify that 53% of the participants currently reject, 19% accept, and 28% are not sure about new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. The participants were all members of the CPED project at the moment of data collection, and the literature about the CPED indicates that all of its members are involved in a focused dialogue about improving their Ed.D. programs. Included in that discussion is the future of those programs' Ed.D. capstone experiences.

The Rationale for Rejection. The analysis of the data from the questionnaire responses from the participants that currently reject new media projects brought forward three categories that justify their positions: unfamiliarity, government sanctions, and traditional dissertation means research study. The idea of unfamiliarity related to both faculty and institutional lack of knowledge of what new media was and the products that new media projects would entail. In order to assure construct validity, I provided the participants with the following definition of new media:

New Media are the aesthetic properties of data and the basic ways in which information is created, stored, and rendered intelligible. It can assume many forms and it evolves and morphs continuously. Formats can include: a website, a comic, a phone application, augmented reality, a wearable technology, among other formats.

Most of the participants provided responses suggesting that they interpreted a new media project as being a project that would not employ any rigorous processes of scientific methodology such as a review of the literature or a methodology to collect or analyze data. In fact, their responses suggested that they understood new media projects as being a completely new research methodology. As the provided definition highlights, and as Chapters One and Two emphasized, new media are the aesthetic properties of data that

make data rendered intelligible. New media projects can take many forms and they are 21st century tools that can provide graduate students a platform to engage with their self-interests and capitalize on their literacies, while using the support of peers and mentors. Those are the main propositions brought forth by connected learning and the multimodal literacy theory. More importantly, new media projects – when pursued – can provide students with novel ways to express academic knowledge and scholarship that could make a more direct impact on the field and consequently better fulfill the goals of the education doctoral capstone experience (Auerbach, 2011). Denying a students' interest in pursuing a new media project solely because an advisor or mentor does not know what new media does doesn't model the behavior of being a lifelong learner. If unfamiliarity is an issue, there should be professional development opportunities created to provide these faculty or administrators with the opportunity to continue learning or perhaps they will learn about these new media while the product is being developed with the student.

The reliance on the written format as the sole medium to showcase and disseminate academic scholarship does not take advantage of the tools available today and fails prepare students to be stewards of the discipline. In fact, Murphy (2007) argues that the real world of school leaders and practitioners is full of quick transactions and more dependence in spoken words. Writing, in their case, is only a small part of the job. He also argues:

Writing sharpens our thinking, we are smugly told. End of discussion. Of course it does, but it is nothing but academic arrogance that allows us to maintain that strategies for sharpening thinking that have so little correspondence to the world of practice should hold the high ground in professional preparation programs. (p. 584)

Gadanis & Borba (2013) agree with that statement and have used new media as alternative forms of research communication. In a recent article, they discuss their project as a project that:

(...) takes on the challenge of using new media and alternative forms of research communication: research-based songs, art, and mini-documentaries to be shared publicly through YouTube, live performances, and broadcast media, with the target audience being K-8 students, teachers, parents, educational organizations and the public. (p. 26)

They have labeled their research as “mathematics performance” (p. 26), and the new media affordances of multimodality and performance have successfully guided their research dissemination.

In the case of the participants that justified their responses on government sanctions, I was able to confirm through document review that the government regulations in those states do not currently prohibit the exploration of new forms of dissemination of a novice scholar’s work. Instead, the main argument in those requirements is that a capstone project should have a rigorous focus on applied research. New media projects can be great tools for applied research. Gadanis & Borba (2013)’s research is an example of that. Because of their form, they can directly connect to students, teachers, parents or anyone interested in their research.

The last category refers to the participants that reported that a traditional dissertation, to them, means a research study. When I interpreted the responses in that category I found that the prevalent opinion is that a traditional 5-chapter written dissertation is how research is done, that is how those participants have demonstrated their knowledge before, and that is how the participants perceive that a capstone experiences should be. However, connected learning and multimodal literacy theory call

for a new pedagogy based on the technological changes that have emerged in the past few decades. Certainly, some technologies available today were not available when some of these participants completed their doctoral requirements, but many agree that Ed.D. dissertations should be applied and have a direct impact on a problem from the field (Auerbach, 2011; McCarthy & Ortloff, 2005; Shulman, 1999). I believe that preventing a student from pursuing a new media project that could directly impact the field directly opposes what an applied doctoral capstone experience is. Additionally, Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian (2006) claim that:

Although most students in the Ed.D. programs do not aim to be researchers, their doctoral programs often treat them as such by offering experiences more similar to Ph.D. programs than the high-level preparation for practice and leadership found in other learned professions (...) Nevertheless, the capstone requirement is some form of dissertation although practitioners are unlikely ever to be asked to produce research like it again (p. 27)

When it comes to consuming the information that is produced by a traditional capstone dissertation Murphy (2007) argues that “by and large, principals and superintendents (those not in preparation programs at the time) do not read journal articles” (p. 584). While that statement is broad and overgeneralized, it leads me to conclude that if they do not read journal articles, then they are not likely to read traditional 5-chapter written dissertations. It is also very likely that while they could access free online journals, they would not have the credentials to log into dissertation online repositories. However, it is certainly conceivable that most of them could easily access a website, a mobile application with their mobile devices, or a personal computer with Internet connectivity. If these tools could allow practitioners to have a glimpse of a Ed.D. graduate student’s doctoral research project, it would already be making more of an impact than only making their capstone experiences available to the committee and

family members. The point I am making is that allowing novice researchers to share their research through the mediums where their research could directly connect with the practitioners in the field would allow for the doctoral capstone experiences goals to be practically tangible.

In summary, examination of the responses from the participants that currently reject new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences supports the assumption that new media projects are not likely to be accepted in the near future. Nonetheless, the factors that keep them from being implemented exist today due to a lack of understanding about what new media is, what new media projects are, and what new media projects could be. Therefore, I believe that if faculty and administrators are provided with the opportunity to see some examples where new media projects are used to impact the field by demonstrating how they are relevant to the practice, how they can be paired with extensive reviews of the literature, and how they could directly solve a problem in the field, new media projects could be executed without extensive resistance.

The Rationale for Acceptance and Undecided Positions. Whilst the majority (53%) of the participants reported that their departments currently reject new media projects as capstone experiences, some reported that they currently accept them (19%), and others were not sure about it (28%). In analyzing the rationale for the latter positions a similar category emerged: Each Case Would be Reviewed Independently. I recommend and support this pragmatic approach, which is also supported by the multimodal literacy theory and connected learning. A student should be able to pursue their areas of personal interest, but the main benefit of pursuing a new media project is achieved when that student's literacies are capitalized on and when they fulfill the goals of the capstone

experience by having a direct impact on a problem of practice. The mentors and committee can guide them through that process.

An additional category that emerged from the analysis of the responses of participants that currently accept new media projects was that the participants were open to new ideas. Some participants' responses suggested that in a lot of their institutions there is a top down approach for the adoption of 21st century tools, which ends up influencing departmental acceptance of these projects. This revelation reinforces the need for educating administrators about potential uses of new media for research dissemination. By providing administrators with examples of how new media projects can be used to fulfill the goals of doctoral capstone experiences, more institutions would promote a more open view of 21st century technologies, and the benefits of research dissemination by the use of new media could be extended to other doctoral programs.

The final category that emerged from the analysis of the responses of participants that are currently not sure about accepting new media projects was lack of demand. Some of the participants reported that students in their institutions have not brought forward the idea of pursuing such projects, but if and when they did they, they would consider them. However, this study found that 63% of the participants reported that there was some institutional regulation regarding capstone experiences in their universities, and 47% of those 63% also reported that new media projects would not be accepted. Evans (2007) suggests that doctoral researchers often fail to criticize or challenge the status quo, fail to change practice, and fail when trying to make theory into practice. Consequently, one of the reasons why students might refrain from pursuing new media projects for their

doctoral capstone projects might be the perceived challenges that would be involved in questioning institutional regulations and changing institutional practices.

Second Research Question

The Patterns. The second research question aimed to identify the patterns between the type and size of the institutions and the acceptance, rejection, or undecided position about new media projects as capstone experiences for Ed.D. candidates. I used the data from the questionnaire responses to guide the document review. To analyze the data, I tabulated the results into percent distributions. After tabulating the results from the institutions that currently reject new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences I was able to identify that 76% of the institutions were classified (Carnegie classification) as research institutions. I was able to find that all of them were public, 4-year or above institutions with a high number of student enrollment (47% had between 30 and 45 thousand students, followed by 88% of institutions that had between less than 15 thousand to 45 thousand students). However, when tabulating the results for the institutions that accepted new media projects and the ones that were not sure about new media projects I found considerably similar results. For the institutions that currently accept new media projects, 83% were classified as research institutions, 50% were classified as public, 4-year or above and the other 50% were private, not-for-profit and 99% of them had between less than 15 thousand to 45 thousand students. For the institutions that were not sure about new media projects, 78% were classified as research institutions, 89% were classified as public 4-year or above and 11% were classified as

private not-for-profit. Finally, 78% of them had between less than 15 thousand to 45 thousand students.

Therefore, after the analysis of the results, I was able to conclude that within the CPED participants there are no significant patterns between they type or size of the institutions and their acceptance, rejection, or neutrality of new media projects. I had initially hypothesized that the type or the size of the institution in this population would bear some influence on the acceptance or rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences in their education programs. However, I was able to conclude that such assumptions could not be appropriately verified solely with CPED participants because of their apparent homogeneity. Nevertheless, in a bigger and more diverse participant population such patterns might emerge. Other factors to consider and that might have some impact on those decisions are the size of the program or the faculty to student ratio in the programs at those institutions.

Third Research Question

The Most Common Requirements. The third research question aimed to identify the most common requirements for capstone experiences at CPED institutions' Ed.D. programs. Changes in the way people communicate brought forth by the development of new technologies suggest a new way for students to express their knowledge (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2003). Whereas many CPED programs are currently engaged in the discussion about alternative ways in which Ed.D. dissertations are structured (Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen, 2012; Dawson & Kumar, 2014), the data analysis from the phone

interviews allowed me to conclude that a traditional 5-chapter written dissertation is still the most common (73%) format required by these institutions.

As Chapters One and Two have highlighted, many authors argue that this format does not successfully address the needs of education research and of novice scholars completing their doctor of education degrees (Auerbach, 2011; Duke & Beck, 1999; Labaree, 2003; McCarthy & Ortloff, 2005). And even though some alternate formats to the traditional 5-chapter written dissertation seem to have already received attention and acceptance in the literature - such as the manuscript format (where several ready-to-publish articles are bundled into a document formatted similarly to the traditional 5-chapter dissertation) and even group projects (Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen, 2012) - the traditional 5-chapter written dissertation projects are still prevalent.

Analysis of the data also allowed me to identify that this traditional format includes: the selection of a committee with a mentor; the development of a three-chapter written proposal; an oral defense in front of the committee; IRB proposal; data collection; data analysis; the development of two more written chapters; and a final oral defense in front of the committee. This format is still the most common format for their capstone experiences.

Quasi-traditional and not-defined models were also reported, but in much smaller numbers (13% respectively). One example of a project in those categories is a project where new media could be employed as part of the dissertation in some form (i.e. data collection tool) but not as a whole project (these findings are complimentary to the findings further discussed in the fourth research question section). Other examples are the portfolio of articles ready for publication as well as group projects, which are

complimentary to the literature about Ed.D. capstone projects (Auerbach, 2011; Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen; 2012; Duke & Beck, 1999; Edminster & Moxley, 2002; Golde, 2007).

The review of the literature in Chapter Two established that for many years scholars have called for reform in the way scholarship is conducted in academic settings and that developments in technology calls for shifts in scholarly environments, especially when it comes to education research (Ayers, 2013; Borgman, 2007, Boyer, 1990; Duke and Beck, 1999; Glassoc, Huber, & Meroff, 1997). Still, analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that many of the participants still believe that the traditional 5-chapter written dissertation means a research study. They had to do it as part of their degree requirements and other graduate students should do them as well. However, the theoretical frameworks of multimodal learning theory and connected learning argue against that. They argue in favor of students being able to experiment with the technologies that are available today, according to their own literacies, and with the support of mentors in order to pursue their personal interests. That pursuit can result in a bigger impact on the field because new media projects could access practitioners that do not usually have the time or capabilities to access and read journal articles or dissertations. Glesne (2010) suggests that making the work of research accessible “to others beyond the academic community [...] means creating in forms that others will want to read, watch, listen to, feel and learn from the representations” (p. 245). I believe that failure to provide the students with such an environment in an academic setting is a disservice to the student, and can hinder the development of alternate forms of scholarly

communication that could potentially directly connect to the field and solve a practical problem.

The Issue of Institutional Regulation. After analyzing the data from the questionnaire about participants' knowledge about their universities' institutional regulation I found that 63% of participants reported that there were institutional regulations regarding the capstone experience in their institutions, and 47% of those institutions with institutional regulation also reported that they did not accept new media projects. That suggests that institutional regulations regarding capstone experiences make programs less likely to accept new media projects.

The most disturbing revelation was found after analyzing the data from the phone interviews. 73% of those participants reported institutional regulations regarding capstone experiences. When they described the types of institutional regulations in their universities, 100% of the participants reported that they required students to receive approval from Institutional Review Board to conduct their research, which was not surprising. Research projects involving people should be ethical and academics should ensure they will be purposeful and relevant while preventing or minimizing the risks to the participants. However, the second highest institutional regulation reported (53%) spoke to the aesthetic formatting guidelines of the project, not the content of the project.

In summary, new media refers to the aesthetic properties of data, how data is rendered intelligible, and could take many forms. Currently, the majority (53%) of CPED participating institutions reject new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. 47% of the institutions that reject new media projects also reported institutional regulations for the capstone experiences, and 53% of them declared that these regulations refer to the

aesthetic formatting of the data. This revelation confirms the significant importance of aesthetics in the communication of scholarship discussed in Chapter Two and supported by Eisner (2004). However, instead of encouraging the dissemination of information and scholarship, the current aesthetics formatting regulations are preventing new media projects to be pursued more prominently.

The Issue of Autonomy. One set of responses seemed very contradictory to me. 73% of the participants reported that there were institutional regulations for doctoral capstone experiences in their university, and that they seemed to have significant impact on the rejection of new media projects. Yet, 53% of them also reported that their program had full autonomy over their programs' capstone experiences. However confusing, this might be a good point for intervention. It is likely that, if provided with examples of how new media projects are relevant to address needs in the field, faculty in those programs could promote and advocate for new media projects. Since faculty advocacy is one of the main categories of factors that could influence the acceptance of new media projects (further discussed in the fourth research question section), they could push for the reconsideration of institutional regulations.

The Issue of Time and a Professional Degree. The analysis of the data from the phone interviews revealed that the majority of the participants (53%) do not require the students to develop their dissertation while taking a course embedded into the program. According to Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen (2012), research on the education doctorate suggests that the distinction between Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs in education is made by the inclusion of a course on advanced statistics. However, the Ed.D. is most often

considered a professional practice doctoral program (Auerbach, 2011; Dawson & Kumar, 2014; McCarthy & Ortloff, 2005). Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen (2012) argue that “professional degrees are typically completed in fixed periods of time, whereas completion of the Ph.D. takes ‘as long as it takes’.” Therefore the embedded formats, which are not currently widely prevalent in the studied CPED programs, may be better to assist Ed.D. students on a timely completion of their capstone experiences.

The Issue of Student Choice on Mentor. With respect to student choice and participation in selecting their mentors and committee members, I was able to identify that 47% of the participants reported that students had no choice in picking their mentors prior to the commencement of their capstone experience. Research on the function of the mentor the dissertation completion, as well as doctoral program attrition, supports the notion that the mentor plays a crucial role in the dissertation process and that role can ultimately influence a doctoral student’s success or failure (Knox et al., 2011). Additionally, connected learning highlights the importance of mentors in guiding the students in their educational experiences and pursuit of their self-interest (Ito et.al.,2013). Allowing the student to have full autonomy to choose a mentor that he can have a good working relationship with may assist the student in pursuing his interests while conducting a rigorous project development. Additionally, the selection of a mentor with the same interests and strong advocacy skills could minimize the barriers brought forth by institutional regulations.

Fourth Research Question

Factors that Influence the Rejection and Acceptance of New Media Projects. The fourth research question aimed to identify the factors CPED institutions' participants perceive as pertinent in the acceptance and rejection of new media projects as capstone experiences in Ed.D. programs. The revelation of these factors better informed me about the current barriers that prevent the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences, as well as the elements that need to be considered in order to promote new media projects' acceptance. After the analysis of the data collected through phone interviews, three main categories emerged that exemplify the factors that could influence the acceptance of new media projects: the demonstration of rigor, faculty advocacy, and new media projects being embedded into the traditional format. The categories that exemplify the factors that could influence the rejection of new media projects were: the perceived lack of rigor, and the fact that it does not fit the traditional model.

The question of rigor significantly influenced whether new media projects were being accepted and rejected as an alternate format for Ed.D. capstone experiences. The way the participants defined the construct of rigor varied, and, whereas it should be further investigated in the context of graduate education, my interpretation of participants' responses in this study allowed me to conclude that to them rigor entails: (1) the integrity of the execution of the scientific method to conduct a research project while fulfilling the benchmark goals of the program; and (2) supervising the project in order to promote a successful articulation of ideas when constructing and communicating meaning. There are many processes involved in the creation of new media projects. Contrary to disregarding rigor, they require a lot more thought and reflection because the

student must think about how things can be communicated through the vast assortment of tools available. Jewitt (2008) argued that:

Multimodality offers new ways to thinking about learning via a focus on meaning making as process of design. It approaches communication as a process in which students (as they are socially situated and constrained) make meaning by selecting from, adapting, and remaking the range of representational and communicational resources (including physical, cognitive, and social resources) available to them. (p. 263)

A mentor and a committee assist a novice scholar in determining the most appropriate research methodology, sample size, or a data analysis technique for a study. In a similar way, they could aid the student in the process of selecting the tools and the process in which meaning-making and communicating is possible, and at the same time insure that it will have a direct impact on a problem from the field.

Faculty advocacy has been identified as a factor that could influence the acceptance of new media projects. Yet, analysis of questionnaire responses suggests that one of the main factors as to why new media projects are rejected is faculty and institutional unfamiliarity about what new media is and the projects that could be done with their application. That finding revealed an immediate need for faculty and administrators' professional development opportunities in order to increase awareness about what new media is, and, more importantly, how it can be used for the expression of knowledge by 21st century learners, and how it can be used to reach out to 21st century consumers of information. Refusing to accept a project due to unfamiliarity is as negligent as being unresponsive about the changes in society brought forth by technological advances. Edminster & Moxley (2002) said:

In a time when developing countries' needs for new knowledge had never been greater, when graduate students' need for richer, more effective means of presenting research are becoming more and more apparent, and when digital

technology provides the capability to meet those needs, graduate schools, faculty, and administrators must develop and support initiatives to institute the electronic publication of theses and dissertations. (p. 102)

I support Edminster & Moxley's statement, but beyond instituting initiatives to support electronic publication of theses and dissertations I believe that they should also support the publication of other new media formats that can provide consumers of information with a better way to access that content and to apply what they learn.

According to my analysis of phone interviews, the rejection of new media projects was frequently attributed to the fact that new media projects do not fit the traditional model and the traditional model, as this study's findings suggest, is still the most prevalent type of capstone experience for CPED Ed.D. programs. Yet, many authors argue that this format does not fulfill the goal of an Ed.D. dissertation. The current most prevalent format fails to connect to education research consumers such as educators and administrators who seldom have time to read, much less access, Ed.D. dissertations (Auerbach, 2011; Duke & Beck, 1998; McCarthy & Ortloff, 2005; Murphy, 2007). Additionally, the analysis of the data from questionnaire responses suggests that the traditional model still stands because the participants perceived the traditional model of the 5-chapter written dissertation to be equivalent to a research study. As it was discussed in Chapters One and Two, and as the multimodal literacy theory and connected learning suggest, many developments in technology, as well as other types of research methods, contest those responses. The literature shows that other formats for Ed.D. capstone experiences are already being adopted (Dawson & Kumar, 2014; Perry & Imig, 2008). Dawson & Kumar (2014) illustrate that the majority of professional practice doctoral dissertations might, among other types, revolve around a common theme to all students, a

team activity that will eventually contribute to a final document, some kind of action research, or practitioner inquiry. The employment of such capstone experiences is undoubtedly supported by the multimodal literacy theory and connected learning. The form and the reachability they could take, paired with the use of new media instead of the traditional form, could be limitless and must be explored.

In my opinion, the belief that the traditional 5-chapter written dissertation is the only true rigorous type of project means that faculty members: (1) Reject that new modes of knowledge expression could ever be developed; and (2) Reject that new modes of knowledge expression could ever fulfill the same (or better) goals of a capstone experiences. And since all that participated in this study reported the required guidance of a mentor and a committee through a doctoral student's capstone requirements, I also believe that when faculty members assume that a non-traditional (i.e. new media) capstone project might not be rigorous they underestimate the competence of their colleagues, because these mentors and committee members are there precisely to guide the novice student and to insure that they are conducting a study that is relevant and rigorous.

Limitations

Because of the choice of case study methodology employed in this study, the generalizability of the findings is limited (Creswell, 2007). While multiple cases were selected to study the phenomenon in more depth, and while constant comparative cross-case analysis was applied in the data analysis methodology, the participants were selected through a purposeful sampling technique and might not represent the views and practices of all doctoral granting universities in the United States. The programs and institutions

involved in the CPED program are currently engaged in a purposeful discussion about their programs, and that discussion involves their capstone experience and what it might look like if revised. Unfortunately, the analysis of data about the participant institutions proved that their types and sizes were relatively similar and that patterns between the size and type of institution and the acceptance, rejection, or neutrality towards new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences could not be determined. Other institutions that are not involved in the CPED may not be still thinking about re-evaluating their capstone experiences. For that very reason, this study might serve as an instrument to shed light on what the capstone experience could be like in Ed.D. granting programs across the United States.

Implications and Recommendations

After analyzing the 32 questionnaire responses, 15 phone interviews, and other relevant documentation, I have identified several ways in which this research's findings contribute to educational research on graduate education, Ed.D. capstone experiences, and relevant recommendations for practice and future research. The first point one is a response to the fact that the majority of CPED program directors in this study reported that new media projects are still not accepted as Ed.D. capstone experiences in their institutions. A great number of participants reported that the concept of new media or new media projects is not known or familiar to them or their colleagues. Justifying the denial of any type of project on unfamiliarity on a subject, tool, or mode of expression is inexcusable in a field where self-actualization and life-long learning is promoted. Therefore, this research project revealed the paramount need for the promotion of professional development initiatives for professors and administrators in the field of

education so that they can better understand: (1) what new media is; (2) its potential benefits for research and display of academic scholarship; and (3) its potential benefits for engaging with novice researchers and their personal research interests, which are supported by the multimodal literacy theory and connected learning. Additional research about the state of acceptance of new media capstone experiences in Ed.D. programs that are not part of the CPED, as well as other professional doctorate degrees, is suggested.

The second recommendation is based on the revelation that the majority of the programs in this study require a traditional 5-chapter written dissertation as their capstone experience, and the process of developing this project is frequently not embedded into the doctoral student's coursework. Since the Doctorate of Education is most often recognized as a professional practice degree, I suggest that it would be highly beneficial for students to have their capstone experience embedded into their coursework so that rigor – one of the dominant factors described by the participants as the critical component for a new media project to be accepted or rejected – could be established, and for the students to complete their programs in a timely manner. Further research comparing capstone experiences that are developed while embedded into a program with the ones that are not embedded, and their impacts on student satisfaction, perception of rigor, and the incidence of new media projects, is recommended.

In this research project, rigor emerged as the most influencing factor in the acceptance or rejection of a new media project as an Ed.D. capstone experience. However, the participants' interpretation of rigor varied significantly. Such diversity in interpretation and meaning supports the need for additional research on the how the

construct of rigor can be defined with respect to graduate education and capstone experiences.

This project revealed that 47% of the participant CPED programs did not allow their students to select the mentors that they work with through the development of their capstone project. Golde (2000) suggests that the mentor-student relationship is paramount for student satisfaction and program completion. Additionally, this study's findings illustrated that faculty advocacy, especially from a mentor, can be instrumental in influencing the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. Therefore, I highly recommend that graduate programs and departments of education reconsider their policies and allow students to choose their mentor as well as their committee members. Additional research on student choice on mentor and committee members and the occurrence of new media or non-traditional capstone experiences is suggested.

Finally, this research revealed that 100% of the participants reported that their institutions required students to receive IRB approval in order to conduct their projects. The second most frequent institutional regulation (53%) related to aesthetic formatting guidelines. That revelation emphasizes the importance of aesthetics in academic research dissemination, but this project's findings also suggest that these aesthetic requirements hinder the development of new media projects. Instead of regulating capstone experiences by aesthetic formatting guidelines, I suggest that institutions should provide students with the options of alternative formats. Ultimately the student, the mentor, and the committee (who know in depth the needs of the field and the ways in which the project would impact a problem on the field) should decide which format is appropriate

based on the student's literacies, strengths, and interests. Research exploring how non-traditional formats of capstone experiences are developed and supported by mentors and committees is recommended in order to provide parameters for the further development of other non-traditional capstone experiences.

Conclusions

This study revealed the current state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at CPED participating programs. Additionally, it revealed the participants' rationale for new media projects' acceptance, rejection, or their neutrality, as well as the current requirements for Ed.D. capstone experiences. The analysis of questionnaire responses in this study revealed that the majority of CPED institutions reject new media projects. The primary categories that emerged from the analysis of the responses of the participants that currently reject new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences were: (1) unfamiliarity; (2) government sanctions; and that in the participant's view (3) traditional dissertations equal research study. The categories that emerged from the analysis of responses of the participants that currently accept new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences were: they are (1) open to new ideas; and (2) each case would be reviewed independently. Very similarly, the categories that emerged from the analysis of responses of the participants that reported not being sure about new media project as Ed.D. capstone experiences were: there is a (1) lack of demand; and (2) each case would be reviewed independently.

My analysis of the documents reviewed revealed that the participants in this study were very similarly classified by type or size. Therefore I was unable to identify patterns between the size and type of institution and their acceptance, rejection, or neutrality about

new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. The analysis of the data from the phone interviews suggested the existence of a significant relationship between institutional regulations and the rejection of new media projects, even though the majority of the participants reported that their departments have full autonomy when it comes to their students' capstone experiences. All of the participants reported that their institutions require IRB approval, and the second most frequent institutional requirement related to the aesthetic formatting of the document.

Finally, this qualitative case study identified the factors that could influence the acceptance and rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences. My analysis of data revealed that rigor is the main factor that impacts the acceptance or rejection of new media projects, however it is my belief that the construct of rigor in the context of graduate capstone experiences should be further investigated. Other factors that influence the acceptance of new media projects are faculty advocacy and whether they are embedded in a traditional format. The other reported factor that can influence the rejection of new media project is that it does not fit the traditional model.

Seymour Papert (1993) said:

The educator must be an anthropologist. The educator as an anthropologist must work to understand which cultural materials are relevant to intellectual development. Then, he or she needs to understand which trends are taking place in the culture. Meaningful intervention must take the form of working with these trends. (p. 32)

However, new media projects - a 21st century affordance that has dramatically affected the world and the culture of today - are still not widely accepted as, and are not yet perceived as, being a vigorous vehicle to produce or disseminate knowledge by most of the institutions that are currently engaged in a meaningful dialogue about their Ed.D.

capstone experiences. The traditional model, the 5-chapter written dissertation, is still very much commonplace even though many authors have argued that its form and readership reach might not be the best to address the objectives of Ed.D. capstone experiences (Ayers, 2013; Auerbach, 2011; Duke & Beck, 1999); Labaree, 2003; and Murphy, 2007).

This very dissertation is a clear example of the dominance of an old paradigm. While I initially wanted to conduct a non-traditional capstone project, I decided to pursue this research project in its traditional 5-chapter written form instead. While I have learned a lot in the process, I am still not fully convinced of whether this process was better than pursuing a non-traditional format. I am sure that it was completed a lot timelier since I did not have to challenge any institutional bureaucratic hurdles. However, when presenting this project to my committee at my defense, I decided to present it in an infographic format (see APPENDIX D) created with a free tool called Piktochart. This graphic visualization of the summary of my data did not include my research project in its entirety, but it was embedded in my personal website (<http://www.addymeira.net/dissertation>). After my defense, it was shared with social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook. By the time I had defended my projects and was working on the revisions of this written document, the analysis of the analytics data on my website suggested that almost 90 people had clicked on my dissertation link. This speed of access and exposure is unprecedented and it could be great for disseminating scholarship - or not. Nonetheless, I believe that exploring the development of projects that have this type of reach and visibility is our duty as educators. This format might have reached other fellow educators that might soon want to read my project in its entirety

(when it is made available in a digital repository). Yet, the way the data was presented and worded might also have reached an audience that previously would never been interested in consuming any type of academic research. My personal opinion is that we should not simply reject any type of capstone project format because we do not know what form they can take. We should be exploring these new formats in an academic environment where mentors and committees can make sure that these projects can contribute to the field. More importantly, documenting the ways in which such projects are created and developed is paramount in a world where new tools and new technologies are available every day, and in which anyone can publish instantly and reach large audiences in an instant.

Boyer (1990) called for a new vision for scholarship, and Eisner (2004) suggested a new vision for education that could be relevant to all aspects of a person's life to prepare the students as artists to be creative and reimagine how scholarship can be done. My hope is that this project can bring awareness about this problem, and that the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences improves in the near future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

New Media as Capstone Experience/Project Questionnaire

1. **What is your full name?**
2. **What is the name of your institution?**
3. **What is your position in your institution?**
4. **Does your institution regulate the types of capstone experiences/projects that doctoral students may choose?**
For example, do they need to be approved by the Graduate School or another University department?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure
5. **Based on the following definition of *new media* - and in your professional capacity (not your personal opinion) - would your department accept a Doctor of Education *new media* capstone experience/project?**

New Media are the aesthetic properties of data and the basic ways in which information is created, stored, and rendered intelligible (Manovich, 2001). It can assume many forms and it evolves and morphs continuously (Socha & Eber-Schmid, n.d.). Formats can include: a website, a comic, a phone application, augmented reality, a wearable technology, among other formats.

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not Sure

If the answer in Question 5 is a) Yes

- 5.1 **You have answered: Yes. Based on the outlined definition of new media my department would accept a Doctor of Education new media capstone experience/project. Why?**

If the answer in Question 5 is b) No

5.1 You have answered: No. Based on the outlined definition of new media my department would not accept a Doctor of Education new media capstone experience/project. Why?

If the answer in Question 5 is c) Not sure

5.1 You have answered: Not Sure. Based on the outlined definition of new media I am not sure my department would accept a Doctor of Education new media capstone experience/project. Why?

APPENDIX B

Phone Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Questions:

1. Are there specific requirements for Ed.D. capstone experiences in your department?
What are they?

2. Are there any formal departmental policies about Ed.D. capstone experiences? Could you please describe them?

3. Are there institutional policies regarding doctoral capstone experiences in your university? Could you please describe them?

If, in the New Media as Capstone Experience/Project Questionnaire, the answer in Question 5 is a) Yes:

4. In your professional opinion, what factors influence the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences?

5. In your professional opinion, what factors influence the rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences?

If, in the New Media as Capstone Experience/Project Questionnaire, the answer in Question 5 is b) No:

4. In your professional opinion, what factors influence the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences?

5. In your professional opinion, what factors influence the rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences?

If, in the New Media as Capstone Experience/Project Questionnaire, the answer in Question 5 is c) Not sure:

4. In your professional opinion, what factors influence the acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences?

5. In your professional opinion, what factors influence the rejection of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences?

(Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews.)

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

“Rethinking the Dissertation: A Case Study on the State of Acceptance of New Media Projects as Ed.D. Capstone Experiences”

Dear Participant,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time with no penalty or loss benefits.

The purpose of this case study is to investigate the state of acceptance of new media projects as Ed.D. capstone experiences at participating institutions of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). The procedure will be a multiple-case study design and will help us understand institution’s rationales for acceptance, rejection, or neutrality towards the use of new media products for Ed.D. capstone experiences.

The first phase will require you to fill out an online questionnaire (where it is anticipated that you will commit 15 minutes or less of your time to complete it) and depending on your responses you may be selected for one recorded follow up semi-structured phone interview (where it is anticipated that you will commit to 45 minutes or less of your time to it). We request that all answers reflect your professional opinions and there are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. Your anonymity will be guarded and your confidentiality will be protected by code numbers, limited access to the data, and locked storage of files.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to you as a participant, please contact the Baylor University Committee for Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Dr. David W. Schlueter, Ph.D., Chair Baylor IRB, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97368 Waco, TX 76798-7368. Dr. Schlueter may also be reached at (254) 710-6920 or (254) 710-3708.

By clicking the link to the survey you consent to participate in this study. If you would like a physical copy of this consent form please email Adeline_Meira@baylor.edu.

LINK TO SURVEY

Adeline Meira
Principal Investigator
Doctoral Candidate
Baylor University
(254) 855-7512

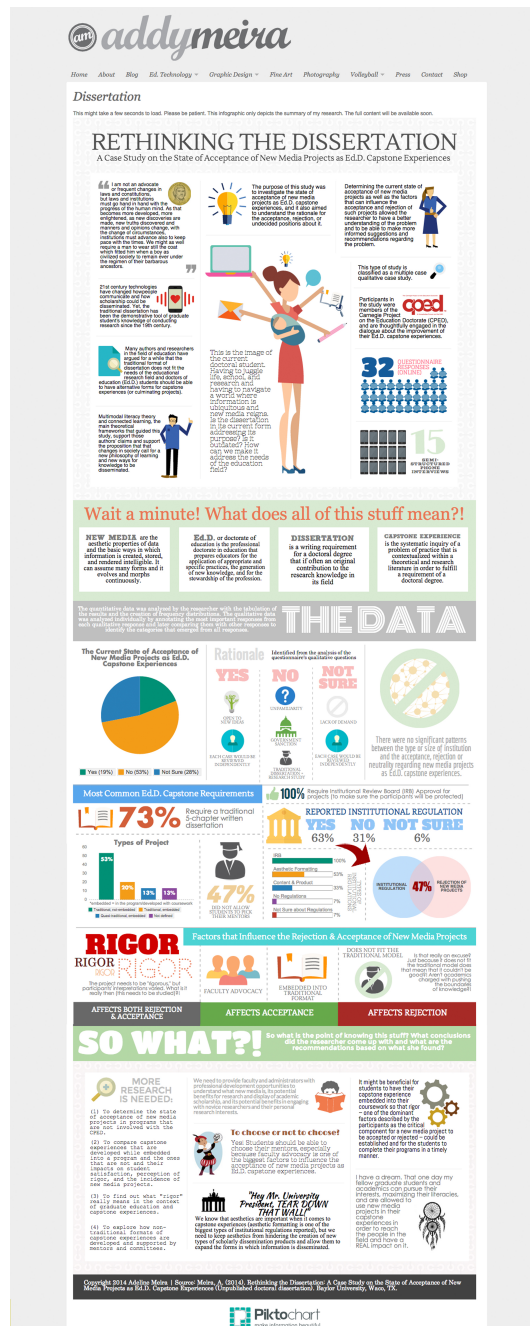
Dr. Doug Rogers
Associate Professor
Dissertation Mentor
Baylor University
(254) 710-4253

Email disclaimer

As you may be aware, electronic communication may be subject to interception, legally by your employer or illegally by another party, while the information is in transit. Therefore, it is possible that your information might be seen by another party and I cannot control whether that happens. Although none of the information requested is of a personal nature, if you are concerned about your data security, I suggest that you print out the questionnaire, fill out the answers by hand, remove information from headers, etc. that identifies you as the respondent and mail the completed questionnaire to the following address: Adeline Meira | 1201 Wesleyan Street | Ft. Worth, TX 76105.

APPENDIX D

Infographic Representation of This Dissertation



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