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PERCEPTIONS OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS CURRENTLY
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SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY REGARDING CERTAIN
ASPECTS OF THEIR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS.

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THE AREAS OF CURRICULUM AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
REGARDING CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THEIR
DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

By

William James Nelson

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum

1973

ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS CURRENTLY IN RESIDENCE IN THE AREAS OF CURRICULUM AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY REGARDING CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THEIR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

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William James Nelson

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions doctoral students in residence Winter Term, 1973, in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education in the College of Education at Michigan State University have regarding certain aspects of their doctoral programs.

An attempt was made to solicit answers to the following questions:

1. What do we know about the doctoral students' educational and professional background?
2. How do doctoral students view the purposes and goals of their programs?
3. What personal information do we have for each of the doctoral students?
4. What are the greatest obstacles facing doctoral students as they attempt to complete requirements for a degree?
5. Has the university been helpful in providing financial assistance?

6. How much flexibility do doctoral students perceive as important, and how much flexibility do they actually have in the make-up of their own decisions within the program?
7. How much involvement do doctoral students perceive to be important, and how involved actually are they in certain aspects of their programs?
8. What is the degree of overall satisfaction doctoral students have with certain aspects of their programs?

Procedures

After sending an introductory letter, questionnaires were mailed to one hundred and six doctoral students. A total of eighty-eight were returned for a 83.0 percent return.

Conclusions

1. The doctoral students who were in residence Winter Term, 1973 in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University represent a diversity of educational experiences and backgrounds.
2. The students listed a variety of purposes for pursuing a doctoral degree, but gaining personal growth and obtaining a better job were the primary reasons.
3. A university teaching position was the most popular choice of doctoral students regarding the position they would be willing to accept upon completion of their doctoral programs.

4. Doctoral students indicated personal and financial obstacles were the greatest hurdles to be overcome as they tried to complete requirements for the doctorate.
5. For those doctoral students who requested financial assistance, the university has been proven helpful in providing it.
6. Doctoral students do not believe they have as much flexibility in regard to requirements for the dissertation as they have in other areas of their programs.
7. An alternative to the dissertation would be selected by a substantial majority of doctoral students if such an alternative was available.
8. Doctoral students feel they are not involved with staff selection, staff evaluation, department policy, and doctoral program appraisal as they should be.
9. A reflexion of questionnaire responses showed that while doctoral students have a general satisfaction with the broader aspects of their programs, they do, however, show a concern about specific areas of their programs. These areas are more personalized programs and more student involvement. Two other major areas of concern are giving thought to alternatives to the dissertation and providing opportunity for student involvement outside the university.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered with the hope that they will be acted on in an attempt to modify and strengthen doctoral programs in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education in the College of Education at Michigan State University.

1. Consideration should be given to making doctoral programs more personalized by providing more opportunities for dialogue between students and faculty members, and by providing more opportunities for spouses to become involved in the program.
2. Consideration should be given for taking the necessary steps to involve doctoral students more directly in certain aspects of their doctoral programs. These aspects include selection of staff members within the department, evaluation of staff members, determination of policy within the department and an appraisal of doctoral programs.
3. Consideration should be given to investigating the feasibility of providing an alternative to the dissertation. Possible alternatives might include film making or internships within the public schools.
4. Consideration should be given to providing more opportunities for students to become involved in educational experiences outside the university setting. Provisions should also be made for the proper processing of those experiences.

**This Dissertation is Dedicated to Marcia Who I Love
More Than Yesterday, Less Than Tomorrow
and
To David and Ann Who Have Taught Me So Much These Past Two Years**

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To the members of my committee, Charles Blackman, Howard Hickey and John Opis. Thank you for your support and continual interest in me as a person.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reform is needed in institutions of higher education if they are going to continue serving our ever-changing society. They must not become victims of mindlessness; that is, "the failure to think seriously about the purpose or consequence--the failure of people at every level to ask why they are doing what they are doing or to inquire into the consequences."¹

As one step toward reform, more effort and commitment could be made to analyze the effects that institutions of higher education have on the people they are designed to serve. If one believes education is a self-renewing process which is never complete, it seems that continual feedback from people within educational institutions would be crucial to the process. To date, procedures for program evaluation and appraisal have, for the most part, been limited to the work of committees appointed by representatives of an institution or limited to studies designed to solicit opinions from people who have already left the institution. While these vehicles of evaluation serve a worthwhile purpose, there seems to be an additional need to query people presently within institutions of higher education. Examples of studies of this nature are Baird's analyses of graduate attitudes

¹Charles A. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 36.

and Heiss' survey of graduate student perceptions of the Ph. D. process. Speaking of the lack of thought a particular institution gives to educating its particular student body, Silberman mentions that in all cases where pressures exist to become uniform, "energy and thought are directed to changing the institution's character, or at least its prestige and status, rather than to figuring out how best to educate the students who are already there."² The needs, perceptions and feelings of people presently being served by educational institutions must be considered and valued before any attempt can be made to improve existing programs and procedures. Further, if institutions of higher education are to produce people who can function effectively in our rapidly changing society, continuous evaluation of all aspects of the preparation program is mandatory.

Need for the Study

Most people in higher education often are critical of public school education. The criticism may be justified, but it is this author's contention that more time should be devoted to looking at ourselves, both as a college that challenges the public schools and as individuals within that college. The processes of self-reform and self-renewal can be difficult and sometimes painful, but they can also be stimulating and growth producing.

Recently, graduate education has been beset by vast numbers of growing problems. While no immediate solutions exist to

²Ibid., p. 106.

these problems, some explanations may be helpful to the reader. Greater demands of society, schools, and universities for high quality personnel have caused many problems for graduate education. Also, the increased cry for relevance by students in graduate programs has contributed to the expansion of problems. Another contributing factor is the change taking place in the undergraduate curriculum of many colleges and universities, i.e., open enrollments, elimination of general education courses as well as traditional majors and specific course requirements, "experimental education", field study, independent study, and various forms of affective learning. When students with this background enroll in traditional graduate programs, a significant fraction find the programs to be rigid, overly specialized, and irrelevant to their needs. The pressures created by this mismatch have caused many problems for graduate education.

Since the end of World War II, higher education in general and graduate programs in particular have been overwhelmed by numbers of students. The rapidity of expansion is indicated by the tripling of annual Ph. D. degrees awarded during the period 1960 - 1970; the number rose from 9,829 in 1960 to 29,872 in 1970.³ This invasion of people combined with the many problems arising in graduate education has resulted in undue stress upon doctoral programs and upon the people responsible for their continual development.

³U. S. Office of Education, "Earned Degrees Conferred, 1959-1960, Bachelor's and Higher Degrees", (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 35; U. S. Office of Education, "Earned Degrees Conferred, 1969-1970", (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 5.

A specific problem facing graduate education is that some business and industrial employers have expressed a dissatisfaction with what they perceive to be narrowness and inflexibility of many new doctoral recipients. Similarly, many Ph. D.'s have found non-academic employment to be limiting and parochial. This problem calls for an exploration of the articulation between curriculum content and employment opportunities.

The question of how graduate programs can be reconstructed to meet the needs of the two year colleges has posed another problem. They are an expanding sector of higher education and might be expected to absorb growing numbers of Ph. D.'s in faculty positions. There is evidence, however, that many community colleges are reluctant to employ traditionally educated Ph. D.'s because of an alleged mismatch between the teaching oriented nature of the job requirements and the research orientation and aspirations of most Ph. D.'s.⁴

Attempts have been made, particularly since 1960, to deal with the problems alluded to in this section. As a result of Berelson's study of graduate education in the United states, new scholarly dialogue about purposes of graduate education has emerged.⁵ Berelson queried university presidents, deans, and department chairmen about what they viewed as purposes of graduate education.

⁴Further evidence of Ph.D.'s in Community Colleges cited in John W. Hutter, "Small Market for Ph.D.'s: The Public Two-Year College", AAUP Bulletin, Vol. 58, No. 1, (Spring, 1972), pp. 17-20.

⁵Bernard Berelson, Graduate Education in the United States, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), p. 16.

Results of his study reflected wide divergence about graduate education. Berelson was successful in opening a decade of scholarly dialogue about graduate education. This dialogue has been increasing in intensity as the years go by. Following in the wake of Berelson's landmark study were numerous studies that reflected a continuing concern about graduate education. The Council of Graduate Schools of the United States, in a two volume report on graduate education, and the pioneer effort of Ann Heiss of the University of California have underscored the need for a new evaluation of graduate education in the United States.

More specifically related to this study, and following the recommendations made by Berelson, the Council of Graduate Schools along with Ann Heiss stressed the need to conduct evaluative studies of individual departments and programs within specific colleges and interest areas.^{6,7} This study is an effort in that direction. These two areas have recently been merged; therefore, a study may lend timely and useful information. One way of evaluating these programs is to listen actively to the people presently being served by the areas of Secondary Education and

⁶American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, "The Doctorate in Education, Volume I, The Graduates", (Washington, D. C., The Association, 1960-1961), p. 110.

⁷Ann M. Heiss, Challenges to Graduate Schools, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1970), p. 6.

Curriculum. Opportunities need to exist for more students to speak, and hopefully, to be heard. Once these opportunities exist, provisions need to be made for gathering information and for submitting it to those in the educational community who not only are interested but also are in positions to strengthen and improve doctoral programs. Hopefully, these changes will be based largely on the perceptions students have of certain aspects of their doctoral programs. The author aims to examine perceptions of the doctoral students currently in residence in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University. It is hoped that a result will be strengthened and improved doctoral programs.

Purpose of the Study

A message from Thoreau can be helpful in keeping this, or any study, in its proper perspective.

What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true today may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields.⁸

This study is a quest for new information and insights; it is not an attempt to prove anything or to find the only right answer(s). The main purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of doctoral students currently in residence in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan

⁸ Henry David Thoreau, Walden as reprinted in The Wind that Blows is All that Anybody Knows, (New York, 1970).

State University regarding their degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of their doctoral programs as preparation for careers as professional educators. Beyond the degree of satisfaction, responses will be solicited from doctoral candidates regarding specific suggestions they have for strengthening existing doctoral programs. In this study, the author will investigate experiences and purposes doctoral students bring with them to a doctoral program. He will also study the nature of their experiences in the program as a basis for determining future doctoral programs.

As a result of this study taking place, it is hoped that the following results: (1) discussion will be stimulated on the issues raised by the study, and (2) action will be taken to strengthen and improve the program in those areas identified as critical by the students. Results of this study may be combined with results of a follow-up study in the same areas to determine how people currently in the program agree or differ in their perceptions from recent recipients of the doctoral degree. Information gathered, along with conclusions, recommendations and further questions, will be shared in a constructive manner with the educational community.

While this study does not assert hypotheses, it does, however, seek to solicit answers to certain questions. Those questions that are asked in this study are these:

1. What do we know about the doctoral candidates' educational and professional background?
2. How do doctoral students view the purposes and goals of their programs?

3. What personal information do we have for each of the doctoral candidates?
4. What are the greatest obstacles facing doctoral candidates as they attempt to complete requirements for a degree?
5. Has the university been helpful in providing financial assistance?
6. How much flexibility exists for the doctoral candidates within their programs?
7. How involved are doctoral students in decisions made within their programs?
8. What is the degree of overall satisfaction doctoral candidates have with certain aspects of their programs?

Major Assumptions

1. A questionnaire, despite its limitations, is an acceptable way in which to gather information. For the purpose of this dissertation, a mailed questionnaire can be defined as a list of questions for information or opinion which is mailed to potential respondents who have been chosen in a designated manner. The respondents are asked to complete the questionnaire and return it by mail.
2. Doctoral students in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University are capable and qualified to evaluate their own experience.
3. The areas, department, and college will welcome an opportunity to take an in-depth look at the doctoral program and give consideration to possible modifications

which this study and additional examinations might suggest.

4. Demographic information gathered in this study about each of the doctoral students will be helpful in interpreting their responses to other parts of the questionnaire.
5. Considerations of this study should be applicable to other doctoral programs in colleges of education.

Limitations

1. The population selected for this study includes those students who are presently classified as doctoral students within the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education in residence Winter Term, 1973, at Michigan State University.
2. Conclusions drawn in this study cannot be generalized beyond those students who responded to the questionnaire.
3. The study is limited to perceptions of doctoral students and not to those of faculty and administration within the department.
4. Those aspects of the doctoral program that are examined in the study were mainly selected by the doctoral students themselves.
5. The study does not examine alternative doctoral programs existant in American colleges and universities. Its focus is limited to established programs within the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University.

6. This study is designed to gather information and opinions which will lead to tentative conclusions, some recommendations and further questions; but it is not designed to offer conclusive proof of something.
7. Although the participants in this study were informed that their specific contributions would be treated in a confidential manner, some may be hesitant to speak candidly of a program in which they are presently involved and to which their future may be linked.
8. Because of the direct nature of this study and the fact that it is unique to this group of participants, a presentation of a review of related literature is not included in this study.
9. The format of the questionnaire may have some limitations:
(a) validity depends on the ability and willingness of the respondents to provide information, (b) there exists the possibility of a misinterpretation of questions, (c) there is no follow-through on misunderstood questions or evasive answers, and (d) there is no observation of apparent reluctance or evasiveness on the part of the respondents.

Overview

Chapter I contained an introduction to the study, a discussion of the need for the study, the purpose of the study, major assumptions of the study, and limitations of the study.

A discussion of the research methodology used in the study, including a description of the population, an examination and

explanation of the instruments used, and the procedures to collect data are contained in Chapter II.

Included in Chapter III is a presentation and analysis of the the data collected during the course of the investigation.

Chapter IV is devoted to a summary of the study and major findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further study.

In the final chapter the author of this study will provide a section entitled "Personal Reflexions" in which the more vivid aspects and reactions to his doctoral experiences will be discussed.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of doctoral student in residence, Winter Term, 1973, in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University regarding their degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of doctoral programs.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the intent of the instrument, describe the population and its selection, tell how concerns were identified, and explain the development and administration of instruments used to identify the concerns.

In discussing the potential of surveys, Walter Borg has commented, "Although the major function of descriptive studies in education will probably always be directed to 'what is', many surveys do go further . . . Surveys . . . can obtain information not only about strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum, but can also elicit recommendations for change. Many of the more recent surveys give us both a description of current status and a source of ideas for change and improvement."¹

An intent of this particular study is to tell something about the current status of selected doctoral programs within

¹Walter Borg, Educational Research, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1963), p. 203.

Michigan State's College of Education and to serve as a source of recommendation for modification and improvement. It has often been said within the College of Education that a study of this nature should be conducted. No one of late has undertaken such a study; thus, the author decided to try to provide opportunities for feedback and to try to create a case for potential change and improvement of doctoral programs.

Intent of the Instrument

Responses to an introductory letter sent to selected doctoral candidates and interviews with doctoral candidates and university staff played a major role in determining the intent of the instrument. The instrument developed to gather information for this study is designed:

1. To gather demographic and descriptive information about the respondents.
2. To explore obstacles facing doctoral students as they seek to complete the requirements for the doctorate.
3. To explore the helpfulness of the university in providing financial assistance when requested by doctoral students.
4. To examine opinions of doctoral candidates regarding the importance of and their actual involvement in professional activities outside the university setting.
5. To examine the degree of flexibility doctoral students perceive to be important in various aspects of their programs, and also to examine the degree of flexibility

they perceive themselves actually having in various aspects of their program.

6. To examine the degree of involvement doctoral students perceive to be important regarding decisions within various aspects of the program; and also, to examine the degree of involvement in decisions that doctoral students perceive themselves as actually having.
7. To examine the degree of satisfaction doctoral students have with certain aspects of their doctoral programs.
8. To seek and share suggestions for modifying and improving doctoral programs.

Design of the Instrument

Information for this study was gathered by means of a seven page questionnaire. The instrument contained a structured, limited response portion and another portion containing discussion questions. One of the critical questions that had to be explored in the instrument design was how to cover a broad range of concerns without "cueing" the respondent. How to ask the "right" kinds of questions is a problem that has always concerned the author. It could be concluded that a discussion, "essay-type" questionnaire would be the most feasible. It is possible with this approach that responses could be quite limited. The researcher would also have a very difficult, if not impossible, task of trying to codify or standardize responses to permit an analysis. The time involved in writing a lengthy response could be a limitation. It was decided to provide a structured portion in the questionnaire in which a respondent could react to a pre-determined series of items which would constitute

a major focus of the study. A section for comments would be provided with each item allowing the respondent room for clarification or expansion. Some discussion questions would be included in the questionnaire to provide latitude and to allow for individual differences among the respondents. This would provide uniform coverage of a number of important issues, permit systematic analysis of the data, yet still allow latitude for the respondents.

Once it was decided what type of questionnaire to use, the topics to be included in the structured portions of the questionnaire were identified, along with the discussion questions. Building the content and format of the questionnaire became a seven step process.

1. Discussions were held with selected doctoral candidates, professors, the area coordinator of Secondary Education and Curriculum, and the Department Chairman of Secondary Education and Curriculum. These discussions were helpful in providing useful input for the content and format of the questionnaire. A professor of research was helpful in making suggestions to insure that the questionnaire would be clear and that the structured items would be easy to score. Students, professors, and the area coordinator raised meaningful questions which aided the author to construct a more viable questionnaire.
2. An introductory letter (see Appendix A) was sent to all doctoral students in residence during Winter Term, 1973, in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University. Responses to the introductory letter were a very necessary part of the questionnaire process. Because of the nature

of this study, the author found it essential to inform the recipients ahead of time about the purpose of the study. They were told that their suggestions and input would form a major part of the content of the questionnaire. The purpose of the introductory letter was threefold: (1) to inform the recipient of the purpose of the questionnaire, (2) to ask for his participation, and (3) to determine the aspects that he would want the questionnaire to cover. Introductory letters were sent to one hundred and eleven doctoral students. Eighty-six letters were returned by mail; eighty-one recipients indicated they would be willing to participate in the study. The remainder, who elected not to participate in the study, did so for a variety of reasons: no longer in the program, would not have the time to complete a questionnaire, and more important things existing for them than this survey. The fact that these people took time to return the letter, even though they elected not to be in the study, was appreciated by the author. In the introductory letter, doctoral students were asked to add to the list of suggested components of doctoral programs; then they were asked to rank order the first five components which they wanted to respond to on the questionnaire. Some patterns emerged from their responses (see Table 1).

The component selected most often was the degree of flexibility within doctoral programs. In addition, this

Table 1

Responses of Doctoral Students to the Introductory Letter

Components of Program	Times Selected	Times Selected 1st	Times Selected 2nd	Times Selected 3rd	Times Selected 4th	Times Selected 5th
Degree of Satisfaction	29	9	1	2	5	12
Dissertation Requirements	35	3	7	5	10	10
Flexibility Within Doctoral Program	47	13	13	9	7	5
Obstacles in Getting Doctorate Degree	21	4	2	6	7	5
Planning a Program	29	5	10	7	5	2
Procedures for Determining Financial Aid	12	2	3	1	3	3
Process for Selecting Doctoral Students	17	3	3	3	3	5
Reasons for Selecting Michigan State University	6	0	0	1	1	4
Requirements for Course Work	25	0	6	5	6	8
Selection of a Committee and Advisor	23	6	4	3	7	3

Table 1 (continued)

Components of Program	Times Selected	Times Selected 1st	Times Selected 2nd	Times Selected 3rd	Times Selected 4th	Times Selected 5th
Systems of Evaluation	29	5	7	5	7	5
Value of the Year of Residency	19	6	3	3	3	4

component was selected first by more doctoral students than any other component. A group of seven components received high priority from the respondents. Following is the list of seven components:

1. Degree of satisfaction with doctoral program,
2. Dissertation requirements,
3. Procedures for determining financial aid,
4. Requirements for course work,
5. Selection of a committee and advisor,
6. Student involvement in decision-making, and
7. Systems of evaluation.

In addition to components which the author suggested, several components were suggested by the recipients. These were listed below with the number of times they were suggested in parentheses.

1. Comprehensive Examinations (6)
2. Competency-Based Programs (4)
3. Effects of Extra Curricular Activities (2)
4. Value of Statistics Requirements (1)

The author found it very difficult to design a questionnaire that contained a reasonable number of questions and yet was comprehensive enough to meet the many and varied requests of the students. In some areas, it was possible to combine and ask questions accordingly; thus, a decision was made to delete some of the suggested components and to combine the remaining components under three major thrusts: flexibility within the doctoral

programs, student involvement in decisions within the programs, and degrees of satisfaction students have regarding certain aspects of their programs. It was decided that one of the discussion questions would be designed to give the respondents an opportunity to discuss a component of the doctoral program which may have been requested but was not included.

3. The third step in the process of building the questionnaire was writing the rough draft to the instrument.
4. The rough draft was presented to selected doctoral students and professors of education. Suggestions were made for improving the relevance of the questionnaire and for phrasing questions so as not to "cue" responses, but instead allowing for a variety of responses. Suggestions were also made to improve the clarity of the questions and to make them easier to answer. It was also suggested that more space be provided for answers.
5. The fifth step was to revise the rough draft of the questionnaire.
6. The revision was then presented to the following people for their reactions: (a) Doctoral seminar of curriculum students, (b) selected doctoral students in secondary education, and (c) selected university professors. After receiving feedback and suggestions from these people, some changes were made in the questionnaire.
7. The last step was to develop the final copy of the questionnaire and to send it to the selected respondents.

Selection and Description of Respondents

Doctoral candidates in residence Winter Term, 1973, in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University were the subjects in this study. These two areas were selected because they are representative areas and have recently been amalgamated; thus, a study of the perceptions of students might provide useful feedback concerning the merge. Finally, a follow-up study of recent graduates in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum is being conducted simultaneously with this study. Some conclusions may be drawn by combining the results of the two studies.

A list of doctoral students in residence Winter Term, 1973, was obtained from the Office of the Registrar. The student directory was used to provide addresses and telephone numbers for all the listed candidates. An introductory letter was sent to one hundred and eleven doctoral students. Eighty-six students returned the letter for a percent return of 77.6. A total of five students stated that they would not participate in the study. One hundred and six questionnaires were mailed; eighty-eight responded for a return rate of 83.0 percent.

An examination of the demographic data about the respondents indicated a substantial majority hold a Master's degree, eight had Specialist degrees, and one holds a B.S. degree. Fifty-six, or 63.6 percent of the doctoral students received their last degree from colleges of universities in Michigan. Seventy or 79.5 percent received their highest degree within the last six years (see Table 2).

Exactly one half of the doctoral students in the study were thirty-five years of age or younger. There were almost twice as many males as females in the study (see Table 3).

A majority of the doctoral students were residing in Michigan immediately before entering the doctoral program (see Table 4).

Thirty-three of the doctoral students declared Curriculum as their major area of study and fifty-five declared Secondary Education as their major area of study. (see Table 5).

Nearly twice as many doctoral students in this study are married than not, and more than twice as many have children (see Table 6).

As for place of residency, the doctoral students are about equally divided among university housing, off-campus apartments, and their own homes (see Table 7).

Most of the doctoral students have completed three or more terms of doctoral study. Thirty-seven, or almost one-half, of the doctoral students have completed their committee selection, comprehensive examination, and dissertation proposal (see Table 8).

The responding students were asked to indicate major positions held prior to entering the doctoral program. Eighty-four of the eighty-eight students held positions in education immediately prior to entering the program. One half of the students were with public schools either as teachers, administrators or resource persons. Almost one fourth of the students were teaching in some capacity at the university prior to entering the doctoral program (see Table 9).

Table 2

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Degree Held and Granting Institution

	Highest Degree	1969-72	1965-68	1961-64	1960-Before	Type of Granting Institutions
	Year Highest Degree Was Awarded					
Bachelor's Degree	1					
Master's Degree	79					
Specialist Degree	8					
Ph. D. Degree	0					
Total	88					
Year Most Recent Degree was Earned		52	18	8	10	Total 88
Michigan College or University						56
Out of State College or University						32
Total						88

Table 3
Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Age and Sex

Doctoral Students	Age	Sex
30	25-30	
14	31-35	
22	36-40	
16	41-45	
4	46-50	
1	51-55	
1	55-60	
Total 88		
Female		30
Male		58
Total		88

Table 4
Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Residency (State)

	Doctoral Students
Residing in Michigan Prior to Entering Program	56
Residing Outside Michigan Prior to Entering Program	32
Total	88

Table 5

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Major Area

	Doctoral Students
Curriculum	33
Secondary Education	55
Total	88

Table 6

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Marital Status and Children

	Doctoral Students
Married	58
Not Married	30
Total	88
Children	60
No Children	28
Total	88

Table 7

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Place of Residence

	Doctoral Students
University Housing	25
Off-Campus Apartments	31
Own Home	32
Total	88

Table 8

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Terms and Parts of Program Completed

A. Terms Completed

	Doctoral Students
1 through 3	32
4 through 6	16
7 through 9	26
10 or more	14
Total	88

B. Parts of Program Completed

Committee Selected	37
Comprehensive Examination	8
Dissertation Proposal	37
Oral Defense of Dissertation	0

Table 8 B. (continued)

	Doctoral Students
None of the Above	6
Total	88

Table 9

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Professional Background

	Doctoral Students
Positions in Education Prior to Entering Doctoral Program	84
Positions Outside Education Prior to Entering Doctoral Program	4
Total	<u>88</u>
Teachers, University	18
Teachers, Public Schools	23
Administrators, Public Schools	6
Resource Person, Public Schools	15
Coordinator, Title III Program	4
Other	22
Total	88

Some held unique positions before entering the program. These included a consultant for schools in Guam, an account executive, a chief investigator for the Michigan Attorney General's Office, and a planetarium director.

The doctoral students were asked what kind of position they would be willing to accept upon completion of requirements for the doctorate. Most of the students selected university teaching as their first choice. An administrative position in public schools was the next most popular choice (see Table 10).

Some interesting kinds of positions were mentioned by the doctoral students. Among these were a children's advocate, an administrative developer in medical education, and a curriculum developer for church related cross-cultural activities.

The doctoral students were asked to list their purposes for pursuing a doctorate degree. Most of the students indicated personal growth as their chief desire. Several students indicated getting a better job as the main reason for pursuing a degree (see Table 11).

Some unique reasons were given for pursuing a degree. Some felt the degree was a "union card" or an authorization for change. Another listed freedom to think in an uninhibited way as his reason for being in the doctoral program. To better serve humanity and to aid others were purposes given as well. One very specific purpose mentioned by a candidate was revamping police curricula when he completed his degree requirements.

Table 10

**Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Choice of
Professional Position**

Positions	Doctoral Students
Administration, Alternative School	4
Administrator, Public School	9
Curriculum Development in Government Supported Projects	5
Teacher, Alternative School	1
Teacher, Public School	1
Teacher, University	35
State Department of Education	5
Supervision in Public Schools	4
Other	24
Total	88

Table 11

Characteristics of Doctoral Students: Purposes of Degree

Purposes	Doctoral Students
Better Job	12
Contribute to Change in Education	2
Entry to Power in Education	4
Flexibility	6
Gain Tenure	2
Increase Knowledge	8
Teach at University	7
Personal Growth	27
Professional	10
Other	10
Total	88

Administration of the Questionnaire

The administration of the questionnaire became a series of tactical decisions. Below are the decisions that were included:

1. Deciding on the most effective time for administering the study.
2. Deciding how to insure that the respondents would not be identified with their responses.
3. Deciding how to get the questionnaire to the respondents and provide for its return.

The decision was made to administer the questionnaire during the latter part of the Winter Term, 1973. It was assumed that nearly all the students would be in at least their second term of doctoral work. In the cover letter attached to the questionnaire, the respondents were assured that they would not be identified with their responses. Names of the respondents were placed in the upper left-hand corner of the questionnaire in a section marked "will be removed when returned". This gave the author the opportunity to know who had responded while removal of the name upon receipt of the questionnaire assured anonymity for the respondents. Most of the questionnaires were mailed to the respondents. A stamped, addressed envelope was provided for the return. Students in the Curriculum Doctoral Seminar at Michigan State University received their questionnaires directly from the author.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The research findings reported in this chapter fall into several major areas:

1. The number of doctoral students responding to the questionnaire.
2. Obstacles to overcome in completing the requirements for the doctorate as perceived by the respondents.
3. Financial assistance available to doctoral students.
4. Flexibility that doctoral students perceive as important; and flexibility doctoral students perceive they have, in regard to making their own decisions within the program.
5. The degree of involvement doctoral students perceive to be important, and the degree of involvement they actually have in their programs.
6. The degree of satisfaction doctoral students have with certain aspects of their doctoral programs.

Also included is a discussion of written responses to questions which appear at the end of the instrument. These questions relate to the major findings of the study and have implications for further study and program modification.

Number of Doctoral Students Responding to the Questionnaire

A total of one hundred and six questionnaires were either mailed or personally delivered to doctoral students in residence Winter Term, 1973, in the areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University. Thirty-seven doctoral students in Curriculum received a questionnaire; thirty-three completed and returned one for a 89.1 percent return. Sixty-nine doctoral students in Secondary Education received a questionnaire; fifty-five completed and returned one for a 79.7 percent return (see Table 12).

A total of one hundred and six questionnaires were distributed; eighty-eight were returned for a 83.0 percent return.

In the reporting of the research findings in this chapter, a distinction will be made between curriculum and secondary education students.

Table 12

Number of Doctoral Students Responding to Questionnaire

Interest Area	Number Sent	Number Returned	Percent
Curriculum	37	33	89.1
Secondary Education	69	55	79.7
Total	106	88	83.0

Obstacles to Overcome

In the questionnaire, doctoral students were asked to rank in order of importance the greatest obstacles for them to overcome as

they completed the requirements for the doctorate. They were asked to select from four categories including academic, financial, personal and others. If they selected "other", they were asked to specify what they meant. Personal obstacles were selected most often by Curriculum students while financial obstacles were selected most often by Secondary Education students (see Table 13).

Many students selected the category labeled "other". Some of the obstacles they mentioned in this category are found in the following list: the on-campus year of residency, the press of business duties, the structure of the conditional doctorate, the lack of options available to students, living in married housing, the administrative paperwork involved and selecting a dissertation topic.

Availability of Financial Assistance

The doctoral students were asked to judge how helpful the university had been in providing financial assistance if it had been requested by the student. A majority of Curriculum students and a majority of Secondary Education students who responded to this question indicated that the university had been very helpful in providing financial assistance (see Table 14).

The doctoral students were asked to indicate how they were financing their graduate studies by indicating a percentage of all ways that applied. University teaching or assistantships were listed most often by both Curriculum and Secondary Education students as providing most of the finances for their graduate studies. Almost one fourth of the Secondary Education students indicated that

Table 13

Doctoral Students' Perceptions Concerning Obstacles That Need to be Overcome
in Completing the Requirements for the Doctorate

Doctoral Students	Academic Obstacles		Personal Obstacles		Financial Obstacles		Other		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	1	3.0	14	42.4	6	18.1	10	30.3	2	6.0	33	100.0
Secondary Education	8	14.5	9	16.3	18	32.7	17	30.9	3	5.4	55	100.0

Table 14

**Doctoral Students' Judgements Concerning Helpfulness of
the University Regarding Financial Assistance**

Doctoral Students	Very Helpful		Helpful		Little Help		No Help		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	10	30.3	5	15.1	2	6.0	2	6.0	14	42.4	33	100
Secondary Education	15	27.2	10	18.1	1	1.8	1	1.8	28	50.9	55	100

scholarships or fellowships were providing most of their financial assistance (see Table 15).

Table 15

**Doctoral Students' Responses Regarding the Financing
of Their Graduate Studies**

Ways of Financing	Number Indicated as Receiving Highest Per- cent by Curriculum Students	Number Indicated as Receiving Highest Per- cent by Secondary Education Students
Job Outside Education	2	2
Personal Loans	2	0
Personal Savings	4	6
Sabbatical Leave	2	2
Scholarship	2	15
Spouse Works	6	3
University Teaching or Assistantship	15	27
Veteran's Benefits	0	0
Total	33	55

Flexibility in Doctoral Programs

Doctoral students were asked how important they thought flexibility was in four areas of the doctoral program. "Flexibility"

was defined as the degree of latitude students have in making their own decisions. The four areas were program planning, selection of a committee, selection of a major advisor, and dissertation requirements. Nearly all the Curriculum students indicated that flexibility was very important in each of the four areas of the doctoral program (see Table 16).

A substantial majority of Secondary Education students indicated that flexibility was very important in each of the four areas of the doctoral program (see Table 17).

The doctoral students also were asked how much flexibility they perceived themselves as actually having in the same four areas of the doctoral program. Nearly all the Curriculum students indicated that they had a great deal of flexibility in program planning, selection of a committee and selection of a major advisor. Less than one half of the Curriculum students indicated they had a great deal of flexibility in the dissertation requirements. One third indicated some flexibility regarding dissertation requirements (see Table 18).

A majority of Secondary Education students indicated they had a great deal of flexibility regarding program planning. A substantial majority of Secondary Education students indicated they had a great deal of flexibility regarding selection of committee and selection of a major advisor. Of those responding, less than one half indicated they had a great deal of flexibility regarding dissertation requirements (see Table 19).

The students were asked for suggestions in terms of too much or too little flexibility in each of the four areas. Twenty-three

Table 16

**Doctoral Students' Judgments Regarding the Importance of Flexibility
in Certain Areas of Their Program**

Areas of Doctoral Programs	Very Important		Important		Of Little Importance		No Importance		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Program Planning	30	90.9	3	9.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100
Selection of a Committee	28	84.8	5	15.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100
Selection of a Major Advisor	29	87.8	4	12.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100
Dissertation Requirements	31	93.9	2	6.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100

Table 17

Secondary Education Doctoral Students' Judgments Regarding the Importance
of Flexibility in Certain Areas of Their Programs

Areas of Doctoral Programs	Very Important		Important		Of Little Importance		No Importance		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Program Planning	41	74.5	14	25.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	100
Selection of a Committee	41	74.5	13	23.6	1	1.8	0	0	0	0	55	100
Selection of a Major Advisor	42	76.3	12	21.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	100
Dissertation Requirements	38	69.0	13	23.6	4	7.2	0	0	0	0	55	100

Table 18

**Curriculum Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Flexibility They Have in Certain
Areas of Their Programs**

Areas of Doctoral Programs	Great Deal		Some		Little		None		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Program Planning	29	87.8	2	6.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	0	0	33	100.0
Selection of a Committee	31	93.9	1	3.0	1	3.0	0	0	0	0	33	100.0
Selection of a Major Advisor	29	87.8	2	6.0	0	0	2	6.0	0	0	33	100.0
Dissertation Requirements	13	39.3	11	33.3	4	12.1	4	12.1	1	3.0	33	100.0

Table 19

Secondary Education Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Flexibility
They Have in Certain Areas of Their Programs

Areas of Doctoral Programs	Great Deal		Some		Little		None		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Program Planning	29	40.0	19	34.5	4	7.2	1	1.8	2	3.6	55	100.0
Selection of a Committee	46	83.6	7	12.7	1	1.8	0	0	1	1.8	55	100.0
Selection of a Major Advisor	38	69.0	10	18.1	4	7.2	3	5.4	0	0	55	100.0
Dissertation Requirements	18	32.7	14	25.4	4	7.2	6	10.9	13	23.6	55	100.0

of thirty-three Curriculum students and twenty-nine of fifty-five Secondary Education students chose to comment on flexibility in their doctoral programs. Most of the doctoral students who commented indicated that there needed to be even more flexibility in each of the areas. They also stressed the need for better communication within the department in terms of finding necessary information to facilitate the selection of a major advisor and a committee.

Many of the students indicated that alternatives to the dissertation should be available. Below is a list of sample comments:

"Much more flexibility is needed, especially for those students who enter the program with a wealth of experience in education."

"We need to know who is available for advising and committees. Their biographies should be on file."

"Methods and philosophies of professors should be labeled and advertised."

"Credit should be given for on-the-job experiences."

"Professors should be concerned with individuals and not with themselves."

"All non-department requirements should be eliminated."

"There is a great need for alternatives to the dissertation."

"Each person and situation must be considered as unique, and each must have his own 'blueprint' for growing."

Involvement in Doctoral Program

Doctoral students were asked to what extent they thought students should be involved in certain aspects of the doctoral program. The aspects included selection of staff members, determination of policy within the department, selection of doctoral students,

appraisal of the doctoral program and the evaluation of the student.

Nearly all the doctoral students in Curriculum thought that students should be very involved or involved in the evaluation of staff, determination of policy within the department, and appraisal of doctoral programs. A substantial majority thought students should be very involved or involved in selection of staff members within the department, selection of doctoral students, and evaluation of self (see Table 20).

Nearly all the doctoral students in Secondary Education thought students should be very involved or involved in an appraisal of the doctoral program and an evaluation of the staff. A substantial majority thought students should be very involved or involved in selection of staff members within the department, determining policy within the department and evaluating themselves. A majority of the students thought that students should have little or no involvement in the selection of doctoral students (see Table 21).

It was the perception of nearly all the doctoral students in Curriculum that they had little or no involvement in the selection of staff members within the department, in the evaluation of staff, in the determination of policy within the department, in the selection of doctoral students, and in an appraisal of doctoral programs. A majority of the students thought they had been very involved or involved in the evaluation of themselves (see Table 22).

It was the perception of nearly all the doctoral students in Secondary Education that they had little or no involvement in the selection of staff members within the department, an evaluation of

Table 20

**Curriculum Doctoral Students' Judgments Regarding the Extent That Doctoral
Students Should be Involved in Certain Aspects of Their Programs**

Aspects of Doctoral Programs	Very Involved		Involved		Little Involvement		No Involvement		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Selection of Staff Members Within the Department	14	42.4	13	39.3	1	3.0	5	15.1	0	0	33	100
Evaluation of Staff	21	63.6	10	30.3	0	0	2	6.0	0	0	33	100
Determination of Policy Within the Department	12	36.3	17	51.5	1	3.0	3	9.0	0	0	33	100
Selection of Doctoral Students	13	39.3	11	33.3	4	12.1	5	15.1	0	0	33	100
Appraisal of Doctoral Programs	26	78.7	6	18.1	1	3.0	0	0	0	0	33	100
Evaluation of Student	18	54.5	8	24.2	1	3.0	6	18.1	0	0	33	100

Table 21

**Secondary Education Doctoral Students' Judgments Regarding the Extent That Doctoral
Students Should be Involved in Certain Aspects of Their Programs**

Aspects of Doctoral Programs	Very Involved		Involved		Little Involvement		No Involvement		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Selection of Staff Members Within the Department	2	3.6	36	65.5	8	14.5	8	14.5	1	1.8	55	100.0
Evaluation of Staff	19	34.5	31	56.4	3	5.4	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0
Determination of Policy Within the Department	14	25.4	32	58.2	5	9.0	3	5.4	1	1.8	55	100.0
Selection of Doctoral Students	2	3.6	14	25.4	26	40.0	9	16.3	4	7.2	55	100.0
Appraisal of Doctoral Program	38	69.0	15	27.2	2	3.6	0	0	0	0	55	100.0
Evaluation of Student	16	29.0	24	43.6	11	20.0	2	3.6	2	3.6	55	100.0

Table 22

**Curriculum Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Extent That They Have
Been Involved in Certain Aspects of Their Programs**

Aspects of Doctoral Programs	Very Involved		Involved		Little Involvement		No Involvement		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Selection of Staff Members Within the Department	0	0	0	0	2	6.0	31	93.9	0	0	33	100.0
Evaluation of Staff	0	0	3	9.0	10	30.3	20	60.6	0	0	33	100.0
Determination of Policy Within the Department	0	0	3	9.0	2	6.0	28	84.8	0	0	33	100.0
Selection of Doctoral Students	0	0	2	6.0	1	3.0	30	90.9	0	0	33	100.0
Appraisal of Doctoral Program	0	0	2	6.0	11	33.3	20	60.6	0	0	33	100.0
Evaluations of Student	12	36.3	6	18.1	6	18.1	8	24.2	1	3.0	33	100.0

the staff, and the selection of doctoral students. A substantial majority thought they had little or no involvement in determination of policy within the department. A majority thought they had little or no involvement in an appraisal of the doctoral program and in an evaluation of themselves (see Table 23).

Eleven of thirty-three Curriculum students and sixteen of fifty-five Secondary Education students chose to comment regarding student involvement in certain aspects of doctoral programs. Those students commented that some of the initiative must come from the students themselves. Below is a list of sample comments:

"There are no formal or informal channels of communication between students and staff."

"I believe student activities in these areas should be directly with the Dean and no lesser administrators."

"College machinery should provide for involvement; although one complicating factor is the transiency of students."

"This is the only questionnaire that I have received dealing with the doctoral program at M.S.U."

"I think management prerogatives are involved in staff selection."

"At times I feel railroaded."

"Only two staff members have helped me look at me."

"Student involvement was good until the curriculum area was absorbed by secondary education."

Table 23

Secondary Education Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Extent That They Have
Been Involved in Certain Aspects of Their Programs

Aspects of Doctoral Programs	Very Involved		Involved		Little Involvement		No Involvement		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Selection of Staff Members Within the Department	0	0	0	0	8	14.5	47	85.5	0	0	55	100.0
Evaluation of Staff	1	1.8	4	7.2	25	45.4	25	45.5	0	0	55	100.0
Determination of Policy Within the Department	3	5.4	7	12.7	17	30.9	28	50.9	0	0	55	100.0
Selection of Doctoral Students	0	0	1	1.8	6	10.9	48	87.3	0	0	55	100.0
Appraisal of Doctoral Program	11	20.0	13	23.6	15	27.2	16	29.1	0	0	55	100.0
Evaluation of Student	8	14.5	14	25.4	14	25.4	15	27.2	4	7.2	55	100.0

Perceived Satisfaction with Doctoral Program

A number of questions were asked the doctoral students regarding their satisfaction with certain components of their doctoral programs. For the purpose of the questionnaire, satisfaction was defined as the degree that the students felt the purposes and experiences brought to the program by them were being served by the program. The students were asked, in terms of facilitating relationships, how they would describe the level of dialogue with graduate students in their area, graduate students in other areas, committee members, their major advisor, and other faculty members.

All the Curriculum students described the level of dialogue with their major advisor as very helpful or helpful. Nearly all the students described the level of dialogue with graduate students in their own area as very helpful or helpful. A substantial majority described the level of dialogue with committee members and other faculty members as very helpful or helpful. A majority described as very helpful or helpful the level of dialogue with graduate students in other areas (see Table 24).

Nearly all the doctoral students in Secondary Education described the level of dialogue with graduate students in their own area and with their major advisor as very helpful or helpful. A substantial majority described the level of dialogue with committee members and other faculty members as very helpful or helpful. A majority described the level of dialogue with graduate students in other areas as very helpful or helpful (see Table 25).

Seventeen of thirty-three Curriculum students and twenty-one of fifty-five Secondary Education students chose to comment on the

Table 24

**Curriculum Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Level of Dialogue
with Certain People in the College of Education**

People	Very Helpful		Helpful		Little Help		No Help		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Graduate Students in Same Area	26	78.7	5	15.1	1	3.0	1	3.0	0	0	33	100.0
Graduate Students in Other Areas	4	12.1	14	42.4	13	39.3	1	3.0	1	3.0	33	100.0
Committee Members	11	33.3	16	48.4	4	12.1	0	0	2	6.0	33	100.0
Major Advisor	22	66.6	11	33.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100.0
Other Faculty Members	5	15.1	23	69.6	4	12.1	1	3.0	2	6.0	33	100.0

Table 25

Secondary Education Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Level of Dialogue
with Certain People in the College of Education

People	Very Helpful		Helpful		Little Help		No Help		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Graduate Students in Same Area	33	60.0	18	32.7	1	1.8	1	1.8	2	3.6	55	100.0
Graduate Students in Other Areas	11	20.0	19	34.5	18	32.7	5	9.0	2	3.6	55	100.0
Committee Members	24	43.6	21	38.1	5	9.0	0	0	5	9.0	55	100.0
Major Advisor	40	72.7	11	20.0	2	3.6	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0
Other Faculty Members	21	38.1	24	43.6	7	12.7	0	0	3	5.4	55	100.0

The doctoral students were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with several components of the doctoral program. These components were the accessibility of their major advisor, the quality of advising, the helpfulness of the committee, the quality of course work, the comprehensive examination and the requirements for the dissertation.

Nearly all the doctoral students in Curriculum indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the accessibility of their major advisors and the quality of advising. A substantial majority indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the helpfulness of their committee and with the quality of their course work. Of those who responded, nearly all indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the comprehensive examination; and a majority indicated satisfaction with the dissertation requirements (see Table 26).

A substantial majority of the doctoral students in Secondary Education indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the accessibility of their major advisors and the quality of advising. A majority indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the helpfulness of their committee and the quality of course work. Of those Secondary Education students responding, a majority indicated little or no satisfaction with the comprehensive examination; and a majority indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with the dissertation requirements (see Table 27).

Doctoral students were asked in terms of their professional development how valuable their course work had been in their major areas, cognate areas, and course work outside the College of Education.

Table 26

Curriculum Doctoral Students' Perceptions of Their Degree of Satisfaction
with Certain Components of Their Doctoral Programs

Components of Doctoral Programs	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Little Satisfaction		No Satisfaction		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Accessibility of Major Advisor	19	51.5	13	39.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100.0
Quality of Advising	19	51.5	13	39.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100.0
Helpfulness of Committee	13	39.3	14	42.4	3	9.0	0	0	3	9.0	33	100.0
Quality of Course Work	8	24.2	19	39.3	4	12.1	1	3.0	1	3.0	33	100.0
Comprehensive Examinations	6	18.1	11	33.3	0	0	1	0	15	45.4	33	100.0
Dissertation Requirements	5	15.1	7	21.2	9	27.2	1	3.0	11	33.3	33	100.0

Table 27

Secondary Education Doctoral Students' Perceptions of Their Degree of Satisfaction
with Certain Components of Their Doctoral Programs

Components of Doctoral Programs	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Little Satisfaction		No Satisfaction		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Accessibility of Major Advisor	27	49.0	21	38.1	6	10.9	1	1.8	0	0	55	100.0
Quality of Advising	20	36.3	28	50.9	5	9.0	2	3.6	0	0	55	100.0
Helpfulness of Committee	19	34.5	23	41.8	8	14.5	1	1.8	4	7.2	55	100.0
Quality of Course Work	1	1.8	33	60.0	20	36.3	1	1.8	0	0	55	100.0
Comprehensive Examinations	3	5.4	7	12.7	8	14.5	8	14.5	29	40.0	55	100.0
Dissertation Requirements	1	1.8	22	40.0	9	16.3	3	5.4	20	36.3	55	100.0

Almost one half of Curriculum students perceived course work in their major areas to be of "great" value. A majority of Secondary Education students perceived course work in their major areas to be of "some" value (see Table 28).

A majority of Curriculum students perceived course work in their cognate areas to be of "some" value. A majority of Secondary Education students perceived course work in their cognate areas to be of "great" value (see Table 29).

Of those Curriculum students responding, a majority perceived course work outside the university setting to be of "great" value. Of those Secondary Education students responding, a majority perceived course work outside the university setting to be of "great" value (see Table 30).

Doctoral students were asked about their professional development regarding their views of the dissertation in relation to the time and effort it required.

One half of the Curriculum students who responded thought that time and effort spent on the dissertation was of "some" value. A majority of Secondary Education students who responded thought time and effort spent on the dissertation was of "some" value (see Table 31).

Regarding the dissertation, doctoral students were asked to indicate whether or not they would select an alternative (film making, internship, etc.) to the dissertation if such an alternative was available.

Twenty-five Curriculum students and forty-nine Secondary Education students indicated they would select an alternative to

Table 28

Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Value of Course Work
in Their Major Area

Doctoral Students	Of Great Value		Of Some Value		Of Little Value		Of No Value		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	15	45.4	13	39.3	4	12.1	1	3.0	0	0	33	100.0
Secondary Education	21	38.1	30	54.5	2	3.6	2	3.6	0	0	33	100.0

Table 29

Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Value of Course Work
in Their Cognate Areas

Doctoral Students	Of Great Value		Of Some Value		Of Little Value		Of No Value		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	8	24.2	21	63.6	4	12.1	0	0	0	0	33	100.0
Secondary Education	28	50.9	20	36.3	2	3.6	0	0	5	9.0	55	100.0

Table 30

Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Value of Course Work
Outside the College of Education

Doctoral Students	Of Great Value		Of Some Value		Of Little Value		Of No Value		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	14	42.4	7	21.2	6	18.1	0	0	6	18.1	33	100.0
Secondary Education	24	43.6	16	29.0	3	5.4	0	0	12	21.8	55	100.0

Table 31

Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Value of Time and Effort
Spent on the Dissertation

Doctoral Students	Of Great Value		Of Some Value		Of Little Value		Of No Value		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	3	9.0	13	39.3	8	24.2	3	9.0	6	18.1	33	100.0
Secondary Education	6	10.9	23	41.8	9	16.3	4	7.2	13	23.6	55	100.0

the dissertation if that option existed within the program (see Table 32).

Table 32

Doctoral Students' Responses Regarding
Alternatives to the Dissertation

Doctoral Students	Number & Percent Indicating Yes to Alternative		Number & Percent Indicating No to Alternative		No to Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	25	75.7	7	21.2	1	3.0	33	100
Secondary Education	49	89.0	6	10.9	0	0	55	100

Doctoral students were asked their feeling about their programs involving activities outside the university setting. A substantial majority of Curriculum doctoral students and a majority of Secondary Education doctoral students felt a "great deal" of their programs should involve activities outside the university setting (see Table 33).

The doctoral students also were asked the extent that their programs actually involved activities outside the university setting. One third of the Curriculum doctoral students indicated that a "great deal" of their programs involved activities outside the university setting. One fourth of the Secondary Education doctoral students indicated that a "great deal" of their programs involved activities outside the university setting (see Table 34).

Fourteen of thirty-three Curriculum students and fifteen of fifty-five Secondary Education students chose to comment on activities outside the university setting as a part of their programs. All

Table 33

Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Extent That They Feel Their
Program Should Involve Activities Outside the University Setting

Doctoral Students	Great Deal		Some		Little		None		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	26	78.7	4	12.1	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	33	100.0
Secondary Education	38	69.0	17	30.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	100.0

Table 34

**Doctoral Students' Perceptions Regarding the Extent That Their Program Actually Involved
Activities Outside the University Setting**

Doctoral Students	Great Deal		Some		Little		None		No Response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum	11	33.3	13	39.3	7	21.2	0	0	2	6.0	33	100.0
Secondary Education	14	25.4	21	38.1	11	20.0	9	16.3	0	0	55	100.0

those students commenting stressed the importance of being involved in activities outside the university setting. These are sample comments:

"Practicums were of great value to me."

"Some of my best experiences were outside the university."

"Real world experience has been more valuable than course work."

"We need an exposure to a variety of programs."

"It depends on the student."

"This is where learning takes place."

"I like the arrangements of self-selection of off-campus activities."

"Such experiences should be available within the department."

"The College of Education has its own goals which have little to do with learning."

In a summary kind of question, doctoral students were asked to indicate the aspects of their programs which are contributing most to their professional development. Tabulating and combining the number of responses "1", "2", and "3", (first, second, and third amount of contribution) showed interaction with faculty members and interaction with other graduate students to be contributing most to the professional development of Curriculum doctoral students. Interaction with other graduate students and independent studies were found to be contributing most to the professional development of Secondary Education doctoral students (see Table 35).

Table 35

**Doctoral Students' Judgments Regarding the Contribution of Certain Aspects of Their
Doctoral Programs to Their Professional Development**

Aspects of Doctoral Programs	Times Selected by Doctoral Students		Times Selected First by	
	Curriculum	Secondary Education	Doctoral Students Curriculum	Secondary Education
Course Work	12	30	6	9
Dissertation	2	5	0	0
Graduate Teaching Assistantship	6	17	1	7
Independent Studies	19	33	6	10
Interaction with Faculty Members	29	31	4	8
Interaction with Other Graduate Students	26	46	13	21
Preparation and Completion of Comprehensive Examination	2	3	1	0
Other	3	2	2	0

Table 35 (continued)

Aspects of Doctoral Programs	Times Selected Second by Doctoral Students		Times Selected Third by Doctoral Students	
	Curriculum	Secondary Education	Curriculum	Secondary Education
Course Work	0	6	6	15
Dissertation	1	3	1	2
Graduate Teaching Assistantship	2	6	3	4
Independent Studies	5	11	8	12
Interaction with Faculty Members	22	10	3	13
Interaction with Other Graduate Students	3	17	10	8
Preparation and Completion of Comprehensive Examination	0	1	1	2
Other	0	1	1	0

Supplemental Findings

Data gathered from a few of the questions will not be reported in this study. One question concerning value of the comprehensive examination was not included because not enough students answered the question. Other questions were not included because the author felt findings were repetitious to findings already reported.

To supplement findings reported thus far in the study, a brief report of some of the major issues found in the discussion section of the questionnaire are included to help clarify some of the research findings.

In the discussion portion of the questionnaire, three questions were posed. This is question one with a report of the gathered responses:

1. Based on your experiences, what essential components do you feel are missing from your program?

Responses to this question were sorted by component. Forty-four Secondary Education students provided seventy-seven pieces of information. Twenty-seven Curriculum students provided fifty-three pieces of information. The information provided covered a variety of components that the students regarded as missing from their programs. Fifteen comments from Curriculum students and ten comments from Secondary Education students dealt directly with the course work component. Sample comments were:

"We need more relevant course work." (This was mentioned by ten students.)

"There should be more emphasis on elementary curricula."

"More books on African Education are needed."

"Course work should be in modules for more flexibility."

"The department and faculty should recognize and accept non-course experiences as alternatives to course work."

"More flexibility in course work is needed."

"I should have freedom to select courses that are relevant for self-growth."

Lack of interaction between doctoral students and faculty and among doctoral students was mentioned by thirteen Curriculum students and nineteen Secondary Education students. Sample comments were:

"More professors should be interested in students as persons."

"Professors should be more accessible to students."

"A formal structure should be set up to bring students and staff together."

"More time is needed with professors to process experiences I have had."

"More interaction is needed with other graduate students."

"I need people who care enough to help me test my ideas."

"I would like to see greater concern and interest on the part of the doctoral committee members for the wishes and desires of the student, rather than a perpetuation of their (committee members) 'pet desires'."

"I need interaction with people who can stimulate my thinking in realistic, rather than theoretical views."

The need for more involvement outside the university setting and the need for internships were components missing from doctoral programs according to nineteen Curriculum students and twenty-three Secondary Education students. Sample comments included:

"I could have used more exposure outside the university."

"Internships should be available."

"More involvement in the field is needed."

"There is a need for realism as to what is happening in the outside world."

"The feasibility of an internship should be investigated."

"We need more faculty who have had recent concentrated teaching experiences in the public schools (get them out of their Ivory Towers)."

"More job related experience with credit is needed."

"An internship would have been more valuable for me than writing a dissertation."

The remaining comments were scattered among several other components of the doctoral program. These are sample comments:

"There should be university support services for dissertation development."

"Programs should be changed because many are outdated."

"More assistantships should be available."

"Lessons on the process of change should be provided."

"More specific help should be provided for writing the dissertation."

"Involvement by students is needed for policy making within the department."

"There needs to be a decision making process within the department."

"Cognitive preparation is needed in some special areas."

"An institution is needed that is ready and able to help me learn."

"There should be more support from the total educational faculty."

"There should be a guarantee of employment upon receipt of the degree."

"There should be competency-based program evaluation."

"I have not had respect for me as a person."

"A program based on competencies to be achieved is needed rather than a series of course numbers and credits to get the degree."

"I would like to see a desire on the part of the advisor to help me and to want me to succeed."

Question two stated: From your current perspective, what changes in your program would you recommend?

Many students stated that their recommendations would follow what they had written in response to the first question. Therefore, it was difficult to report accurately responses to the second question. Recommendations were made mostly in three areas of the doctoral program.

1. Improvement of course work.
2. Increased interaction between faculty and students.
3. Increased opportunities for involvement outside the university setting.

Twenty-five Curriculum students and forty-three Secondary Education students chose to comment on the second question. Most of the suggestions were similar to responses made to the first question. Following are sample comments regarding suggestions which were made in response to question two and which were not found in response to the first question:

"More combined departmental courses should be offered."

"I would allow students to choose a full course of studies with constant dialogue with persons of more wisdom than some peers and some professors."

"I could recommend much more work in real-life situations away from Erickson Hall."

"Eliminate the ridiculous residency requirements for graduate students who are on assistantships and instructorships."

"There should be less pressure on deadlines."

"There should be an advisor seminar."

"The department should offer an exploratory type program on a one term basis."

"There should be more emphasis on elementary curricula."

"There should be more encouragement of a generalist point of view."

"There should be a better understanding of alternatives before beginning a program."

"There should be more emphasis on student problems rather than administrative concerns."

"Let graduate students evaluate courses and professors on success in accomplishing stated objectives."

"More instructors are needed who know about the 'real world'."

"Do away with the comprehensive examination."

"Strengthen the Ed. D. degree to make it a real option from the Ph. D."

The concluding portion of the questionnaire was a blank space for the respondent's additional comments about the questionnaire. They

could discuss aspects of the program which were not covered and mention other relevant items related to the doctoral program. The doctoral students could use this portion for a response to a component of the program that they may have requested in the introductory letter, but was not included in the questionnaire. There was a wide variety of responses, so no attempt will be made to categorize. Fifteen curriculum students and twenty Secondary Education students chose to use the concluding portion for comments. These are sample comments:

"I would wish to see more evening courses available for students interested in interdisciplinary studies. Catalog descriptions of courses need more specificity."

"The support given to us has been fantastic. I was in the College of Social Sciences before coming to this department. I came alive when I came to the latter."

"I have had a very positive experience in my program as long as I expose myself to a few select professors. Outside these select few, I find I'm continually paying money and time to meet their needs as people, learning little or nothing, getting angry at the institution, and hoping to get out of the whole experience as soon as possible."

"I am extremely happy to have been here these three years. They have been great growing years. Best of all, almost everything was my choice, and I profitted from that."

"Numerous professors from the College of Education should spend an evening or class period with doctoral students sharing their expertise. This would give us a chance to broaden our experiences and give us a chance to challenge those who believe differently than we do."

"The university is basically a monolith with little respect for its clientele. Do it or get out is the message from most professors."

"I was hoping you would ask about the three consecutive term residency requirement."

"The university classroom should be a more active experience than passive as it is now. It should be a place for exploration, failure, and success."

"Graduate students are required to do research, but we are not made aware of the research emphasis of professors within the College of Education."

"Graduate school is much like slavery. The practicing of theory should start in the college classroom. This is the only way that it will filter down or up. Some professors get their kicks out of being the "tough" people. This is ridiculous. Their goals and objectives need to be re-evaluated P.S. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to express myself."

"A rather confusing assortment of questions. It is difficult, without inference, to realize what you want and how, meaning the formation of the questions seem to be "wide-open"."

"I still have to write a dissertation even though I have just designed a program which has received acclaim over much of the country."

"This questionnaire really requires too much thought. Most of this could more satisfactorily be dealt with by the personal interview technique of sampling."

"As I finish this, I find some of the changes could have been made by me had I been open to making them or asking for more help. I find myself being inconsistent in answering different questions."

"It has been a good year! Things may change when the dissertation efforts begin."

As a rule, those students who took the time to offer written comments, were very constructive with their criticisms. They raised questions which should be explored, and the author has benefited from the suggestions that were made.

A summary of the study and major findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study will comprise Chapter IV. Finally, a brief section will be used by the author to note personal reflexions regarding his doctoral experiences.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL REFLEXIONS

This last chapter is compiled with the following four purposes in mind: (1) to summarize the study and major findings, (2) to draw conclusions, (3) to make recommendations, and (4) to make suggestions for further study. Finally, a brief section will be used by the author to note personal reflexions regarding his doctoral experiences.

Summary of the Study and Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions doctoral students in residence Winter Term, 1973, in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education in the College of Education at Michigan State University have regarding certain aspects of their doctoral programs.

To initiate this study, an introductory letter was mailed to one hundred and eleven doctoral students in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education in the College of Education at Michigan State University. All the students were in residence at the university during Winter Term, 1973. The purposes of the introductory letter were to ask the doctoral students if they wanted to participate in the study, to explain its purpose, and to find out what aspects of the doctoral program they wanted an opportunity to give response. Eighty-six doctoral students returned the introductory letter with all but five students agreeing to participate in the study.

Responses to the introductory letter were a very necessary part of the questionnaire process. Building the content and format of the questionnaire became a seven stepp process.

1. Discussions were held with selected doctoral students, professors, the area coordinator of Curriculum and Secondary Education, and the department chairman.
2. The introductory letter was sent.
3. A rough draft of the questionnaire was written.
4. The rough draft was presented to selected doctoral students and professors of education.
5. The rough draft of the questionnaire was revised.
6. The revision was presented to the following people for their reactions: (a) doctoral seminar of Curriculum students, (b) selected doctoral students in Secondary Education, (c) selected university professors.
7. A final copy of the questionnaire was developed and sent to the selected respondents.

The questionnaires were mailed or personally delivered to one hundred and six doctoral students. Thirty-three of thirty-seven Curriculum students completed and returned the questionnaire for a 89.1 percent return. Fifty-five of sixty-nine Secondary Education students completed and returned the questionnaire for a 79.7 percent return. A total of eighty-eight of one hundred and six doctoral students completed and returned questionnaires for a 83.0 percent return.

The questionnaire was used in an attempt to solicit answers to the following questions:

1. What do we know about the doctoral students' educational and professional backgrounds?
2. How do doctoral students view the purposes and goals of their programs?
3. What personal information do we have for each of the doctoral students?
4. What are the greatest obstacles facing doctoral students as they attempt to complete requirements for a degree?
5. Has the university been helpful in providing financial assistance?
6. How much flexibility do doctoral students perceive as important, and how much flexibility do they actually have in the make-up of their own decisions within the program?
7. How much involvement do doctoral students perceive to be important, and how involved actually are they in certain aspects of their programs?
8. What is the degree of overall satisfaction doctoral students have with certain aspects of their programs?

In this portion of the chapter, major findings resulting from asking the above questions will be summarized. While these findings do not provide "right or wrong" answers, they do provide useful information upon which conclusions and recommendations will be based.

Findings of this study showed fifty-six or 63.6 percent of the students had received their highest degree from a college or university in Michigan. Seventy or 79.5 percent of the students had received their highest degree within the last six years. Sixty-three point six percent of the doctoral students were residing in Michigan immediately

prior to entering the doctoral program. Eighty-four of eighty-eight doctoral students held positions in education prior to entering the doctoral program.

Doctoral students were asked how they viewed the purposes and goals of their doctoral programs. Most of the students indicated their main purpose for pursuing a doctoral degree was to gain more personal growth. Obtaining a better job was listed by many students. Thirty-five or 39.8 percent of the students indicated they wanted a position at a university upon receiving a doctorate.

In order to obtain some personal information for each of the doctoral students, a number of questions were asked. Findings showed exactly one half of the students to be thirty-five of age or younger. Almost twice as many men as women participated in the study. Sixty-five percent of the participants are married and sixty-eight percent have children. Most of the students have completed three or more terms of study as doctoral candidates. Almost one half of the students have selected a committee, taken the comprehensive examination and have a dissertation proposal accepted.

The doctoral students were asked to select the greatest obstacles they had to overcome as they attempted to complete the requirements for the doctorate. Fourteen, or 42.4 percent of the Curriculum students indicated personal obstacles as being the greatest obstacles.

A substantial majority of doctoral students who requested financial assistance indicated the university was either very helpful or helpful in providing the assistance.

A number of questions were asked concerning the flexibility of doctoral programs. "Flexibility" was defined as the degree of latitude students have in making their own decisions. Students were asked how important they thought flexibility was and how much flexibility they actually had in four major areas of doctoral programs. Nearly all the students indicated flexibility to either be very important or important in program planning, selection of a committee, selection of a major advisor, and dissertation requirements. Nearly all the students indicated they did have flexibility in all the areas except requirements for the dissertation.

A number of questions were asked concerning the involvement of doctoral students in certain aspects of their doctoral programs. A substantial majority of the respondents indicated doctoral students should be either involved or very involved in the selection of staff members within the department, the evaluation of staff members, the determination of policy within the department, and an appraisal of doctoral programs. The respondents also indicated that, in reality, they either were not involved or they had little involvement in the aforementioned aspects.

The doctoral students were asked a number of questions regarding their degree of satisfaction with certain components of their doctoral programs. A substantial majority of the students indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the accessibility of their major advisor, with the quality of advising and with the helpfulness of the committee. The students indicated they were not as satisfied with the quality of course work, the comprehensive examinations and the requirements of the dissertation. When asked whether or not they

would select an alternative to the dissertation if such an alternative were available, twenty-five of thirty-three Curriculum students and forty-nine of fifty-five Secondary Education students indicated they would select an alternative to the dissertation. A substantial majority of doctoral students indicated a "great deal" of their programs should involve activities outside the university setting, but less than one third of the students indicated their programs actually involved activities outside the university setting.

The doctoral students were asked to appraise the contributions made by certain aspects of their doctoral programs to their professional growth. Curriculum students indicated that interaction with faculty members and interaction with other graduate students were the two aspects contributing the most to their professional development. Secondary Education students indicated interaction with faculty members and independent studies were the two aspects contributing the most to their professional development.

Conclusions

As a result of this study, some conclusions can be drawn which may be used as a basis for modifying and strengthening doctoral programs in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education in the College of Education at Michigan State University.

1. The doctoral students who were in residence Winter Term, 1973, in the Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University represent a diversity of educational experiences and backgrounds.

2. The students listed a variety of purposes for pursuing a doctoral degree, but gaining personal growth and obtaining a better job were the primary reasons.
3. A university teaching position was the most popular choice of doctoral students regarding the position they would be willing to accept upon completion of their doctoral programs.
4. Doctoral students indicated personal and financial obstacles were the greatest hurdles to be overcome as they tried to complete requirements for the doctorate.
5. For those doctoral students who requested financial assistance, the university has been proven helpful in providing it.
6. Doctoral students do not believe they have as much flexibility in regard to requirements for the dissertation as they have in other areas of their programs.
7. An alternative to the dissertation would be selected by a substantial majority of doctoral students if such an alternative was available.
8. Doctoral students feel they are not involved with staff selection, staff evaluation, department policy, and doctoral program appraisal as they should be.
9. A reflection of questionnaire responses showed that while doctoral students have a general satisfaction with the broader aspects of their programs, they do, however, show a concern about specific areas of their programs. These areas are more personalized programs and more student involvement. Two other major areas of concern are giving

thought to alternatives to the dissertation and providing opportunity for student involvement outside the university.

These areas should be examined by the Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum with a view toward modifying and strengthening doctoral programs. It is with this thrust in mind that recommendations will be made in the next section of this chapter.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered with the hope that they will be acted on in an attempt to modify and strengthen doctoral programs in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education in the College of Education at Michigan State University.

1. Consideration should be given to making doctoral programs more personalized by providing more opportunities for dialogue between students and faculty members, and by providing more opportunities for spouses to become involved in the program.
2. Consideration should be given for taking the necessary steps to involve doctoral students more directly in certain aspects of their doctoral programs. These aspects include selection of staff members within the department, evaluation of staff members, determination of policy within the department and an appraisal of doctoral programs.
3. Consideration should be given to investigating the feasibility of providing an alternative to the dissertation. Possible alternatives might include film making or internships within the public schools.

4. Consideration should be given to providing more opportunities for students to become involved in educational experiences outside the university setting. Provisions should also be made for the proper processing of those experiences.

The following recommendations are offered for other universities to consider prior to initiating modification of doctoral programs.

1. Consideration should be given to investigating the potential for flexibility that exists at Michigan State University prior to taking steps to strengthen doctoral programs. This flexibility exists in the selection of doctoral students, selection of a committee, completion of a program of study, completion of a comprehensive examination, and the completion of requirements in the cognate area of study.
2. Consideration should be given to the following questions which are raised as key issues to be examined prior to initiating modification of doctoral programs.
 - a. To what extent should doctoral programs reflect the unique backgrounds of persons entering the programs?
 - b. To what extent should doctoral programs reflect the variety of purposes and goals of the doctoral students?
 - c. To what extent should doctoral programs provide for student differences resulting from a wide

range in age, nature and quality of experiences?

- d. To what extent should doctoral programs provide a balance between the need for competence in a program and the unique competencies held by people within the program?
- e. To what extent should doctoral programs provide flexibility as a means of meeting the diverse needs of students?
- f. To what extent should doctoral programs provide means for students to become involved in the decisions which vitally affect their interests?
- g. Are appropriate provisions made for field work experiences and for the processing of those experiences?
- h. Are appropriate provisions made for the continual examination and evaluation of doctoral programs?

Suggestions for Further Study

In this section of the chapter, suggestions are made for further studies.

1. Studies similar to this one should be conducted periodically in order to keep the faculty in the areas of Curriculum and Secondary Education attuned to the doctoral candidates' perceptions of the quality of their programs?
2. A study involving the respondents of this study should be undertaken in future years to determine if their

perceptions of the quality of their programs have undergone a change in light of their career experiences.

4. A study should be undertaken which involves faculty members' perceptions of doctoral programs.
5. Studies similar to this one should be conducted within colleges of education at other leading universities to determine if doctoral students at other universities have similar concerns.
6. A study should be undertaken to investigate what accounted for the disparity of satisfaction doctoral students felt with certain aspects of their programs.

Personal Reflexions

During the past two years, it has been my good fortune to be a part of the Curriculum area in the College of Education at Michigan State University. I believe people in Curriculum have found many ways of continually allowing a student to find what is best suited for his interests, needs and talents. Differences are appreciated; cooperation is practiced; and warm, authentic people are always there for support.

When the data from this study is collapsed, it becomes apparent that my positive reactions are not shared by everyone who participated in the study. It might be worthwhile to investigate what accounted for the disparity of satisfaction doctoral students had with certain aspects of their programs. The department may have been at fault by failing to acknowledge the different educational backgrounds, educational purposes and professional experiences

students had when they began the program. A limitation of this study was that it offered a profile of the department, and not a profile of people within the department. I believe student reactions to the study were based primarily on their associations with the people who comprise the Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum.

If positive change is to occur, it must begin with the people who comprise the interest areas within colleges of education. Hopefully, when people examine this study they will not attempt to hide within it; but rather, they will look within themselves and ask how they can change, and what they can contribute to the improvement of doctoral programs. If the latter occurs, more people can come together, share their differences, then strive to create healthier environments which will better serve the needs of students and society.

I believe doctoral students should have the right to take an active part in the selection of administrators and faculty members when those positions vitally affect their interests. This study showed doctoral students have not had an active role in decision making within Secondary Education and Curriculum. Consideration should be given to the decision making process within the recently amalgamated areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum. The questions of how decisions are going to be made and who is going to make them are crucial to the future success of the department.

I want to re-emphasize that my experiences as a doctoral student have been extremely worthwhile. I have never regretted leaving a secondary principalship and returning to school with no

employment guarantees beyond graduation. My main concern is that the integrity of the Secondary Education and Curriculum be maintained so that future doctoral aspirants may have similar opportunities for beautiful learning experiences.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

4378 Okemos Road
Okemos, Michigan 48864
February 5, 1973

Dear

Please allow me to introduce myself and to explain the purpose of this letter. My name is Bill Nelson, and I am in the second year of the doctoral program in the area of curriculum. Yes, I am doing a dissertation that involves a questionnaire, and I would like your assistance. Most of us entered the doctoral program with some definite purposes in mind. By this time, we probably are aware of how well the program is serving those purposes.

This study is an effort to gather reactions of doctoral students in residence to some components of their program. Providing useful feedback to those who are concerned with the evolution of doctoral programs is one way of examining and strengthening them. As a preliminary to my study, I have indicated in this letter some components of doctoral programs that might be useful to investigate. Please add to the list other components that you would like an opportunity to respond to on the coming questionnaire. Your response to this letter and later to the questionnaire will be of great help to me. The questionnaire will contain some open-ended questions; it will serve also as an indicator of your preparations of certain aspects of the doctoral program.

Since time is an important factor, please complete this form as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in the midst of what I am sure is a very crowded schedule.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson

(Name) Would you be willing to participate in this study?

(Participation would amount to returning this form and later completing a brief questionnaire with some open-ended questions.)

Appendix A (continued)

Following are some components of doctoral programs that would be studied. Please add to this list and rank order the items with your first preference being number one.

- _____ Process for selecting doctoral students
- _____ Flexibility within doctoral programs
- _____ Student involvement in decision making
- _____ Selection of a committee and an advisor
- _____ Obstacles in getting a doctoral degree
- _____ Procedures for determining financial aid
- _____ Reasons for selecting Michigan State
- _____ Dissertation Requirements
- _____ Systems of evaluation
- _____ Planning a Program
- _____ Requirements for course work
- _____ Value of the year of residency
- _____ Degree of satisfaction with doctoral program

APPENDIX B

4378 Okemos Road 207D
Okemos, Michigan 48864
March 12, 1973

Dear

The areas of Secondary Education and Curriculum in the College of Education at Michigan State University are interested in the evaluation of graduate programs. This questionnaire is part of a dissertation that aims to examine the perceptions of doctoral students in residency, regarding their degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of their doctoral programs. Information and opinions gathered in this study will be available upon your request.

In an introductory letter, you were asked to indicate aspects of the doctoral program to which you would like an opportunity to respond. The suggestions were very helpful in constructing this questionnaire. It can not include all your suggestions; therefore, please take advantage of the space(s) provided for comments.

You will not be identified with your answers, and no member of the faculty will have access to the returned questionnaire. Your name in the upper left hand corner will be removed from the questionnaire upon its receipt.

As time is still an important factor, the return of this questionnaire within ten days will be appreciated. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided for your convenience. Thank you for your assistance.

Cordially,

/ s /
Bill Nelson

BN/lp

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE TO DOCTORAL STUDENTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your response with an "X" or a written comment in the space(s) provided. If sufficient space is not provided, please use the back portion of the individual pages.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1. What is the highest degree you have received?

1. B.A./B.S. 2. M.A./M.F. 3. Spec.
4. Ph.D./Ed.D. 5. Other (Please specify) _____

_____ Year received
_____ Major field
_____ Minor field
_____ Institution

2. What is your major area of doctoral study?

1. Curriculum 2. Secondary Education
3. Other (Please specify) _____

What is your cognate area of study?

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

In what state were you residing immediately before entering the doctoral program?

Please list major positions you held prior to entering the doctoral program. Begin with your most recent position.

Employer

PURPOSES AND GOALS

Please list as concisely as possible, and in order of importance, your three purposes for pursuing a doctoral degree.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Please indicate three positions (1=first choice; 2=second choice; 3=third choice) you would be willing to accept upon completion of your doctoral program.

1. Teacher, public school
2. Teacher, alternative school
3. Administrator, public school
4. Administrator, alternative school
5. Teacher, university
6. State department of education
7. Supervision in public schools
8. Curriculum development in government supported project
9. Other (Please specify) _____

Title of position

PERSONAL INFORMATION

4. What is your age? ☐ 25-30
☐ 31-35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ 41-45
☐ 46-50 ☐ 51-55 ☐ 56-60
5. What is your marital status?
☐ married ☐ not married
6. Do you have any children?
☐ yes ☐ no
7. Where are you residing during your year(s) of residence?
 1. ☐ University housing
 2. ☐ Off campus apartment
 3. ☐ Your own home
 4. ☐ Other (Please specify) _____
8. How many terms have you been a doctoral student at M.S.U.?
☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ 10-more
9. Which of the following parts of your doctoral program have you completed?
 1. ☐ Committee selection
 2. ☐ Comprehensive examination
 3. ☐ Dissertation proposal
 4. ☐ Oral defense of dissertation

DOCTORAL PROGRAM

10. What are the greatest obstacles for you to overcome in completing the requirements for the doctorate? (Please rank all in order of importance; 1=first in importance; 2=second in importance)
 1. ☐ Academic 2. ☐ Personal
 3. ☐ Financial 4. ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

11. If you have requested financial assistance, how helpful has the university been in providing it?
 1. ☐ Very helpful 2. ☐ Helpful
 3. ☐ Little help 4. ☐ No help
 Comment _____

12. How are you financing your graduate studies? (Please indicate the percentage for all that apply.)
 1. ☐ Personal loans
 2. ☐ Personal savings
 3. ☐ University teaching or assistantship
 4. ☐ Job outside education
 5. ☐ Spouse works
 6. ☐ Sabbatical leave with pay
 7. ☐ Veteran's benefits
 8. ☐ Scholarship
 7. ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

page 3

In terms of facilitating relationships, how would you describe the level of dialogue with:

	Very Helpful	Helpful	Little Help	No Help
13. Graduate students in your area	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Graduate students in other areas	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Your committee	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Your adviser	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Other faculty members	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comment _____

To what extent do you think flexibility is important in each of the following areas:
 (for the purpose of this questionnaire flexibility means degree of latitude students
 have in making their own decisions.)

	Very Impt.	Important	Of Little Impt.	No Importance
18. Program planning	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Selection of a committee	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Selection of a major adviser	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Dissertation requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____

To what extent have you had flexibility in each of the following areas?

	Great Deal	Some	Little	None
22. Program planning	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Selection of a committee	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. Selection of a major adviser	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. Dissertation requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____

In terms of too much or too little flexibility, what specific suggestions would you make
 in any of the following areas?

Program planning _____
 Selection of a major adviser _____
 Selection of a committee _____
 Dissertation requirements _____

In what extent do you think doctoral students should be involved in the following aspects of the doctoral program?

	Very Involved	Involved	Little Involvement	No Involvement
26. Selection of staff members within the department	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Evaluation of staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Determination of policy within the department	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Selection of doctoral students	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Appraisal of doctoral program	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Evaluation of you	_____	_____	_____	_____

To what extent have you been involved in each of the following aspects?

	Very Involved	Involved	Little Involvement	No Involvement
32. Selection of staff members within the department.	_____	_____	_____	_____
33. Evaluation of staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
34. Determination of policy within the department	_____	_____	_____	_____
35. Selection of doctoral students	_____	_____	_____	_____
36. Appraisal of doctoral program	_____	_____	_____	_____
37. Evaluation of you	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments _____

Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with each of the components of your doctoral program. For the purpose of this questionnaire, satisfaction will mean the degree to which you feel the purposes and experiences you brought to the program are being served by the program.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Little Satisfaction	No Satisfaction
38. Accessibility of major adviser	_____	_____	_____	_____
39. Quality of advising	_____	_____	_____	_____
40. Helpfulness of committee	_____	_____	_____	_____
41. Quality of course work	_____	_____	_____	_____
42. Comprehensive examination	_____	_____	_____	_____
43. Dissertation requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____
44. Other items specified	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments _____

45. In your professional development, has course work within your major area been:

1. ___ Of great value 2. ___ Of some value
3. ___ Of little value 4. ___ Of no value

46. In your professional development, has course work within your cognate area been:

1. ___ Of great value 2. ___ Of some value
3. ___ Of little value 4. ___ Of no value

47. In your professional development, has your course work outside the college of education been:

1. ___ Of great value 2. ___ Of some value
3. ___ Of little value 4. ___ Of no value

Comments on course work _____

48. In your professional development, has the experience of the comprehensive exam been:

1. ___ Of great value 2. ___ Of some value
3. ___ Of little value 4. ___ Of no value

What changes would you make in the comprehensive examination? (time given within program, format, etc.) _____

49. In your professional development, as you view the dissertation, is time and effort spent on the dissertation:

1. ___ Of great help 2. ___ Of some help
3. ___ Of little help 4. ___ Of no help

What factors influenced your choice of dissertation topic? (if applicable) _____

50. If an alternative to the dissertation (film making, internship, etc.) would be available, would you choose it in place of the dissertation?

1. ___ yes 2. ___ no Please explain _____

How was your adviser chosen, and how do you think the adviser should be chosen?

Was Should Be

1. Student choice _____
2. Adviser assigned without consulting student _____
3. Adviser assigned after consulting student _____
4. Other (Please specify) _____

How was your doctoral committee chosen, and how do you think it should be chosen?

Was Should Be

1. Student choice _____
2. Committee members assigned without consulting student _____
3. Adviser suggests committee members _____
4. Other (Please specify) _____

How was your doctoral program planned, and how do you think it should be planned?

Was Should Be

1. Student planned _____
2. Adviser planned _____
3. Adviser and student planned _____
4. Other (Please specify) _____

How was your dissertation topic chosen, and how do you think it should be chosen?

Was Should Be

1. Student selected _____
2. Adviser selected _____
3. Adviser and student selected _____
4. Other (Please specify) _____

51. To what extent have the requirements and expectations of your program been communicated to you?

1. ___ Well-communicated 2. ___ Communicated
3. ___ Little Communication
4. ___ No Communication Comment _____

52. To what extent do you think your program should involve activities outside the university setting? (workshops, in-service training, consulting, observing innovative programs in schools)

1. ___ Great deal 2. ___ Some
3. ___ Little 4. ___ None

Comment _____

53. How much of your program has involved activities outside the university setting?

1. ___ Great deal 2. ___ Some
3. ___ Little 4. ___ None

Comment _____

54. Which of the following statements describe the aspects of your doctoral program that are contributing most to your professional development. (Rank all that apply in order of importance, 1=first in importance; 2=second in importance)

1. ___ Course work
2. ___ Independent studies
3. ___ Dissertation
4. ___ Graduate teaching assistantship
5. ___ Preparation for and completion of comprehensive examination
6. ___ Interaction with faculty members
7. ___ Interaction with other graduate students
8. ___ Other (Please specify) _____

Based on your experiences, what essential components do you feel are missing from your program?

1.

2.

3.

From your current perspective, what changes in your program would you recommend?

1.

2.

3.

Please use this space for additional comments about this questionnaire, aspects of your program which were not covered, and other relevant items.

THANK YOU