

Appendix EE. Sample Consistency Chart of Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

Findings	Interpretations	Conclusions
1. The overwhelming majority of participants indicated that the course work did not prepare them to conduct research and write their dissertations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course work cannot fully prepare students for the practicalities involved in conducting research and writing a dissertation. • Doctoral programs do not provide a supportive environment. • There are unrealistic expectations on the part of programs vis-à-vis what students should be able to do. • There are unrealistic expectations on the part of students. • Personal idiosyncrasies come into play. 	Students who enroll in doctoral programs should not expect that course work alone will or can fully prepare them to conduct research and write their dissertations. Completion of a dissertation is a journey the student undertakes that is content specific and, as such, becomes a process of discovery. The primary purpose of course work is to provide a sound theoretical foundation.
2. All 20 participants expressed the need to know the content and to understand the process involved in conducting research and writing their dissertations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and process are intertwined. • During course work, students are not yet ready for the content knowledge. • Later, when students embark on dissertation work, they don't understand the rigorous process. • Students are unmotivated to carry out the process. 	Being grounded in theory alone is insufficient. Students also need practical know-how, and they need to acquire this through more informal means. In the absence of formal preparation, students need to be open to learning informally.
3. The majority of participants attempted to learn what they needed to know by reaching out in dialogue with colleagues and others, rather than through more formal means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults learn best through dialogue, reflection, and collaboration, and so students struggling through the dissertation process seek out their colleagues. • Learning with colleagues who are in the same boat is comforting and might be less threatening than approaching "experts" to ask for advice. 	Dialogue with colleagues in a similar situation can provide a source of support. Dialogue also offers the opportunity for reflection and action. Collaborative opportunities hold the potential for development of new understanding and new learning.
4. The majority of participants indicated that they relied on themselves to facilitate their progress. More than half of these same participants also said that colleagues were instrumental in helping them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults generally want to feel in charge. • Adults generally want to be self-reliant. • When students find themselves in a "common" situation, they tend to band together in camaraderie and are empathic toward one another. • Determination is important! 	Most adult students have a preference for directing their own learning. Progress also is largely a function of personal characteristics as well as motivation and drive.
5. The majority of participants cited lack of good, timely, and consistent advisement as a major barrier standing in the way of their progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advisement that is available does not always meet students' needs. • Students might have unrealistic expectations of their advisors. • Advisement might be intentionally or unintentionally ineffective, and may in fact be a real impediment to students' progress. 	To move forward, students need support, feedback, and guidance from advisors. Timely and consistent advisement must be an integral part of the doctoral experience. The experience cannot function optimally as a solitary endeavor.