

Life in School for Advanced Graduate Students:
A Survey Assessment of Multiple Challenges and Stressors

Marshall University

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Abstract

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the quality of life experienced by graduate students pursuing advanced degrees at Marshall University. Specifically, this study will investigate the extent to which pursuing an educational doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction or Educational Leadership affects a student's quality of life.

Rationale:

The current body of research suggests that doctoral students make substantial sacrifices to pursue advanced degrees. These sacrifices can greatly impact the quality of life experienced by these students. This study aims to inform the graduate faculty at Marshall University of the nonacademic strains applied to doctoral students. This research will be beneficial to future doctoral students.

Procedures:

This study consists of a descriptive survey specifically designed to examine the quality of life experienced by doctoral students at Marshall University.

Population:

The population of this study includes all doctoral students at Marshall University's Graduate College. The survey will be distributed to doctoral staff for review and revised accordingly. Upon final approval from Dr. Childress and the doctoral staff, the survey will be distributed via survey monkey to all doctoral students in Marshall University's College of Education and

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Introduction

For decades, American colleges have suffered from embarrassingly low attrition rates; Gardner (2008) states that 40% - 70% of doctoral students will leave their programs before completion. Indications have shown that multiple reasons could lead doctoral students to leave a doctoral program (Austin, Cameron, Glass, Kosko, Marsh, Abdelmagid, & Burge, 2009). Regis (2014) describes five categories of problems that can lead to program exit: lack of academic preparation, lack of financial resources, lack of motivation, lack of faculty and administrative support, and lack of social involvement. These five elements are vital to success in a doctoral program.

Academic preparation lays the foundation for strong academic performance when pursuing a doctoral degree (Regis, 2014). Many students are not prepared for the transition to a doctoral program. This transition requires socialization into the university community culture where rules and roles are not clearly stated (Austin, et. al. 2009). Financial resources, although not an academic issue, can become a major burden for doctoral students. It can be argued that financial burdens could be the leading reason for doctoral students to exit a program prematurely. Doctoral students without money to cover expenses are more likely to drop out than those with financial support. Financial struggles contribute to an increase in dropout rates and lengthen the time needed to complete a doctorate (O'Bara, 1993). Many institutions recognize and this issue and some (ex. Baylor University, University of Maryland, and Clark University) have provided financial support for struggling doctoral students (Regis, 2014).

Universities are addressing the lack of motivation exhibited by doctoral students by developing and implementing programs engineered to motivate doctoral students (Regis, 2014). Another way to address the lack of motivation is through increased faculty and administrative

support. A line of communication must be established between faculty members and students. This line of communication should be fostered by program administration (Regis, 2014).

Socialization can allow adult students and faculty can cooperatively communicate and make learning truly enjoyable improve retention rates (Regis, 2014). Socialization ensures that students develop critical thinking skills and internalize the values of academia (Austin, et. al., 2009). Another major social factor is conflict. Conflict in personal, professional, and educational situations can increase dropout rates in doctoral students. Family conflicts occur more commonly with women than men. This contributes to increases in dropout rates for women (O'Bara, 1993).

Stress is considered a major contributing factor by O'Bara (1993). Doctoral students report stress in the areas of intellectual incompetence and fear of failure. Stress related to academic work appears in two forms; students either passively wait for external feedback or actively self-evaluate their own work. Stress can also be family-centered. Doctoral students who start or add to their families while in a program are at a greater risk for failure than those who do not (Callary, Werthner, & Trudel, 2012). Time constraints can also contribute to student drop out at the doctoral level. Students who struggle to balance personal, professional, and academic lives are at greater risk for dropout than those who can manage their time (Onwuegbuzie, Rosli, Ingram, & Frels, 2012).

Statement of Problem

The issue of attrition in doctoral programs is a concerning one. Doctoral students resemble the scholarly image of universities. Doctoral students also utilize more university resources than undergraduate and master's students. These resources include technology, library and faculty resources. Doctoral attrition is an abominable waste of university resources and must be reduced at all costs (O'Bara, 1993). Little is known about the factors that contribute to

attrition at Marshall University. Due to the changing makeup of doctoral students, research must be conducted to determine the needs of doctoral students.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of pursuing a doctoral degree on the personal lives of doctoral students at Marshall University. This study will examine the lives of doctoral students in the C&I and Ed. Leadership programs in the areas of population demographics, social and financial support, career/work, and personal experiences. The information collected in this study will be beneficial in determining the supports and resources offered to doctoral students by Marshall University.

Research Questions

The following specific questions were used to guide the study:

1. What is the demographic make-up of the current class of Ed.D. Students?
2. What types of support (social and financial) do current students have while pursuing their doctoral degree?
3. How do Ed.D. Students rate the stress related factors they experience while pursuing their doctoral degree?
4. How do Ed.D. Students rate the physical and emotional changes they experience while pursuing a doctoral degree?
5. How do Ed.D. Students rate the effects of pursuing a doctoral degree on their career and work?
6. What feedback does Ed.D. Students provide regarding the issues experienced while pursuing a doctoral degree?

Survey Design/Methods

This study consists of a mixed-methods descriptive survey specifically designed to examine the quality of life experienced by current doctoral students at Marshall University. When the survey was administered, fifty-four students were enrolled in the Curriculum and Instruction Program and fifty-six were enrolled in the Educational Leadership Program. Twenty-two Curriculum and Instruction students and 25 Educational Leadership Students completed the survey; for a total of 47.

The study involves an online-survey that consists of both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The survey instrument collected information about the demographics of the doctoral students, social and financial support, physical and emotional changes, and career issues while pursuing a doctoral degree. Students also provided information relating to the issues they experienced in an open-ended question at the end of the survey.

After reviewing literature concerning the issues, concerns, and barriers doctoral students face while pursuing a doctorate degree, students from a survey design class through the College of Education and Professional Development at Marshall University created the survey instrument. The survey is included in Appendix E.

The demographic section of the survey instrument consisted of 10 questions (questions 1-10) that included information about the students' status in the program, reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree, and descriptive information concerning their lives (i.e., gender, age, employment status, etc.). Although the survey was not divided into sections, the instrument did address three focus areas: social and financial support, career/work issues, and personal experiences of a doctoral student.

Questions 11, 12, 13, and 18 on the survey instrument address the social and financial concerns of a student pursuing a doctoral student. These questions assessed the primary support of a student, the financial resources, and expected outcomes of earning a doctoral degree. Factors contributing to stress, problems or concerns in personal life situations, exercise, and emotional experiences were assessed in questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 20 of the survey instrument. Question 21 on the instrument was an open-ended question to gain additional feedback the doctorate students deemed pertinent in relation to issues they have faced while pursuing their doctoral degree.

Current faculty, the survey design class, co-workers, and fellow doctoral students assisted in validating the survey. The anonymous survey was administered using Survey Monkey. There were no identifying information or IP addresses that were collected from participants. A faculty member within the graduate program emailed the invitation in July 2015 to complete the survey to all currently enrolled students in both Ed.D. Programs. The survey was closed in August 2015.

Findings

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the quality of life experiences and determine various components associated with pursuing an advanced graduate degree at Marshall University. Specifically, this study investigated these contributing factors and the extent of their influence on students quality of life while pursuing an educational doctorate degree in Curriculum and Instruction or Educational Leadership. To determine these contributing influences a survey was developed through Survey Monkey and questions were organized by the following categories: (a) participants demographic characteristics, (b) students' socialization into their specific doctoral program, (Curriculum and Instruction or Educational

Leadership), (c) financial obligations and associated obstacles, and (d) the sacrifices made in the students' pursuit of their degree and the affects these sacrifices had on their quality of life.

Detailed survey responses were systematized by question and can be found in Appendix A.

Participants Characteristics

Participants of this study were asked ten items which provided demographic information for this study. Of the 47 respondents, 73.9% were female, and 26.1 were male. One hundred percent of the respondents were between the ages of 30 through 59 years of age. The majority, 89.4%, were employed full time, 8.5% reporting part-time, and 2.1% reporting no employment at the time of this study. Program major were equally spilt with 53.2% in Ed.D. Educational Leadership and 48.8% in Ed.D. Curriculum and Instruction. Of those students, 56.5% are completing required coursework, 39.1% have been admitted into candidacy (portfolio defended), and 4.3% have had their prospectus approved. Of these respondents, 91.5% are not a member of a cohort. When asked what factors influenced their decision to pursue a doctoral degree, 74.5% reported for career advancement, 4.3% reported they wanted to change their field of study, 10.6% reported they were unable to find employment, 80.9% reported they wanted to increase their knowledge base, 44.7% reported they wanted a pay increase, and 19.1% reported other unspecified reasons. And among these respondents, 23.4% reported they typically enrolled in three credit hours per semester, 61.7% reported they typically enrolled in six credit hours per semester, and 14.9% reported they typically enrolled in nine credit hours per semester.

Questions nine through 11 objectives were to collect factual information from the respondents. Participants were asked what learning style environment best suited their needs, 76.6% chose hybrid class as the most suited style of learning, 17.0% preferred the traditional face to face delivery style of learning, and 6.4% preferred online courses. Of the 47 participants

in the survey, 61.7% reported being a parent of a dependent child or primary caregiver of another person; and participants reported immediate family, 57.4%, as their primary source of supportive network with program faculty, 8.5%, as the least supportive source.

Socialization of Students in a Doctoral Program

Question 11 was to determine who the strongest support group, 57.4% was family while 8.5% reflected the lowest report of faculty support.

Question 19 refers to the level of social support from work supervisor with each of the following categories; work supervisor and furthering my education (3.87%), supervisor supportive of using work time to further my education (2.61%), and supervisor is supportive of taking time off from work (2.91%). Also included within question 19 the participants were asked two additional questions on interferences that might make a difference in obtaining their education; 2.93% confirmed that work related commitments did interfere with their education and 2.60% confirmed that school related commitments interfered with work.

Question 20 asked participants how obtaining their education interfered with their social and family life. When asked about feelings of guilt of being away from their family 2.13% respondents agreed it did, when asked it was difficult being away from their family while obtaining their degree, 1.96% agreed it affected them, and 2.26% stated they missed many family functions often since obtaining their degree.

Financial

Question 12 objective collected factual information from the respondents concerning the financial aid they receive to further them in their pursuit in obtaining a doctorate degree, 55.8% depended on federal, university, or private funding, 44.2% depended solely on loans, 25.6% received tuition reimbursement, 4.7% depended on research assistantship/graduate

Assistantships/teaching assistantships, and 11.6% received other means of financial help.

Question 13 objective revealed that only 3.57% of the participants were worried about financial responsibilities with the higher rating contributions to stress being time management and balancing family and work responsibilities. The fear of failure was the lowest stress related concern at 2.30%.

Stress Related Issues of Students in a Doctoral Program

Question 14 thru 17 objectives collected factual information from the respondents in related to health concerns and behaviors. Based on average ratings from the Likert scale provided, out of 46 responses, 3.46% reported poor sleeping habits or lack of sleep, 3.33% reported increased levels of anxiety, caffeine intake increase was reported at 3.30%, 3.07% reported poor eating habits, 3.0% experienced increases in irritability while 2.96 noticed a change in body weight. Respondents reported that 2.37% they had an increase in family concerns and problems yet when it comes to marriage and relationship issues in regards to the program, only 1.87% was reported as a concern.

Exercise

Questions 15 thru 17 concentrated on the respondents exercise routine. According to the findings most 45.7% reported exercising more than ninety minutes a week while the lowest response was tied at 10.9% 30 to 60 minutes a week and do not exercise at all. When asked if student responsibilities prevent the student from exercising 52.2% indicated that it does while 39.1% said it did not; 8.7% responded as not exercising at all.

Position Outcome

When asked what type of position would like to be obtained after completing the doctoral degree, 72.3% of the respondents wanted to pursue employment in a college or university as

either a faculty member or in administration, 12.8% wanted to pursue the public school system as either a faculty member or in administration, and 8.5% wanted to go into the private school system.

Work related Support

When the respondents were asked about the support they receive from their supervisors 3.67% of the respondents reported their supervisor to be completely supportive while 2.63% of respondents reported school issues did interfered with work causing extra stress.

Sacrifices/Family Stressors

Question 20 relates to the added stressors when pertaining to family. According to the Likert scale results, 2.26% have missed family time due to class coursework, 2.13% of the respondents feel guilty being away from their family, and 1.29% reported having to pay for alternative care-giving arrangements to help while in the doctoral program.

Discussion/Implications/Recommendations

The focus of this study was on a group of currently enrolled Doctoral Students in the Ed.D. Program at Marshall University Graduate College. The data gained from the survey can assist programs and faculty with what services need to be offered to doctorate students to ensure their success. Recognizing that 89% of the doctoral students who participated in the survey work full-time in addition to the 61% who enrolled in six hours a semester, suggests that personal time away from family and non-academic activities can be limited. The findings demonstrate how doctoral students have dual roles while pursuing their degree. One recommendation would be for program staff and faculty to utilize the information from this survey which suggests 76% of students prefer the hybrid style classroom when taking courses. This could imply that due to

working and family responsibilities, the hybrid can be the most effective for a doctoral student's success.

Factors such as time management, balancing work, and financial worries were noted to be the largest contributors to stress. Doctoral programs and faculty can help educate their students on the available resources to aid in decreasing the stress factors while they are in school. Career advancement was the highest response concerning the reason for pursuing a doctoral degree. One recommendation could be that Career Services at Marshall University is integrated in the advising and/or planning of doctoral students' career goals to aid in achieving their career goals post doctorate.

This study also alludes to the need of future studies; especially in regards to men pursuing doctorate degrees and why there are fewer men enrolled at Marshall University in a doctoral program as opposed to women. Additionally, what the factors are preventing men from pursuing a doctoral degree compared to women, and a deeper look at the differences in experiences, both academic and personal, while pursuing a doctorate degree?

References

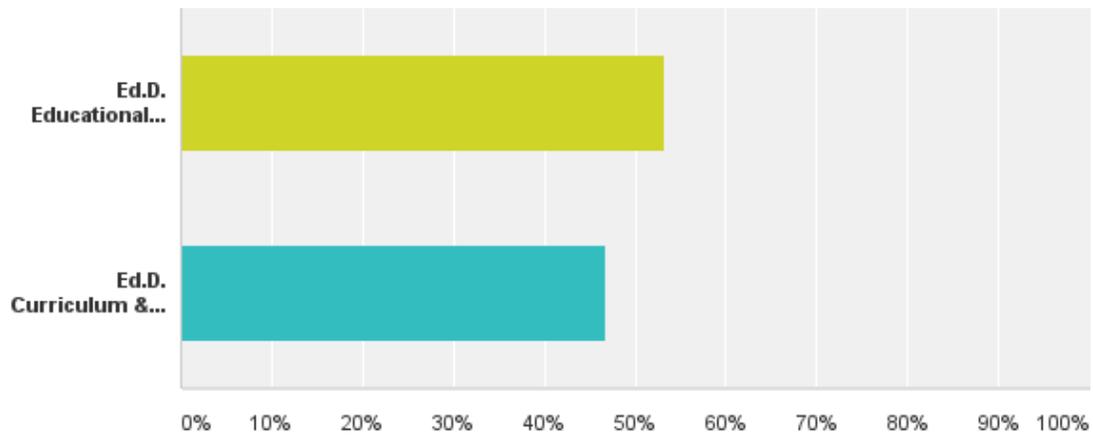
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Appendix A

Survey Monkey – Results and Tables

Q 1: Degree program currently enrolled in:

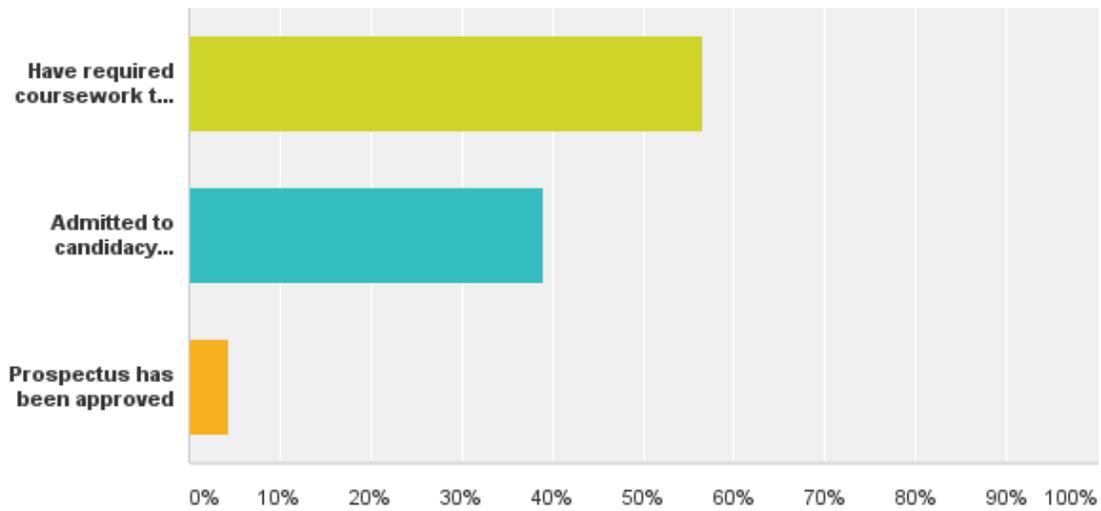
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Ed.D. Educational Leadership	53.19% 25
Ed.D. Curriculum & Instruction	46.81% 22
Total	47

Q2: Which of the following best describes your current status in the Ed.D. Program?

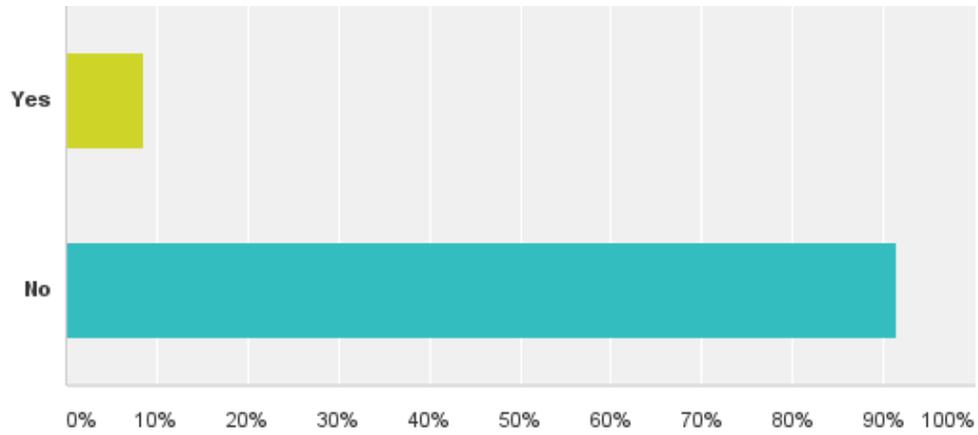
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Have required coursework to complete	56.52% 26
Admitted to candidacy (portfolio defended); prospectus not approved	39.13% 18
Prospectus has been approved	4.35% 2
Total	46

Q3: Are you a member of a cohort?

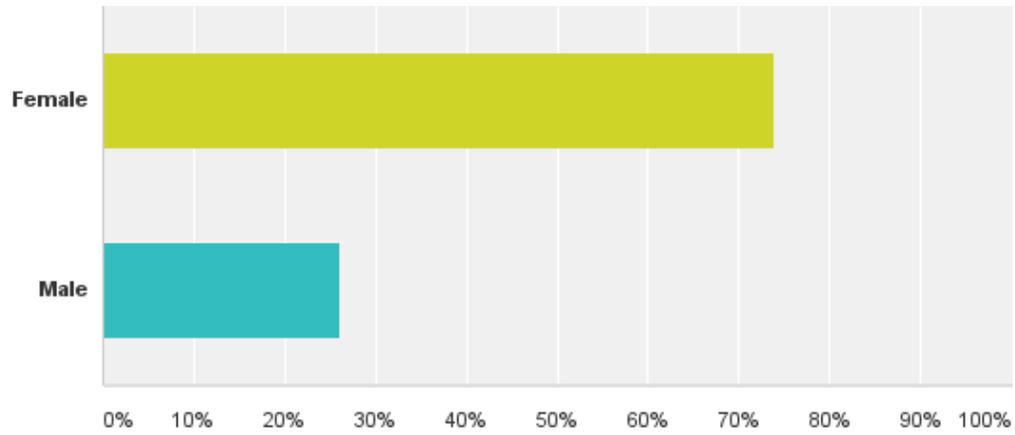
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	8.51% 4
No	91.49% 43
Total	47

Q4: Which best describes you?

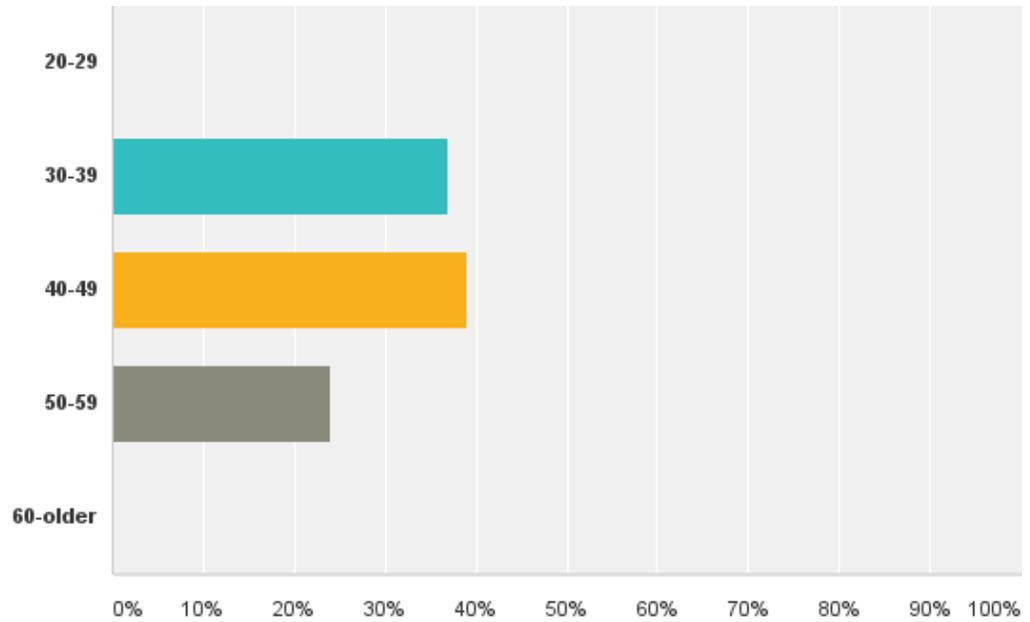
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Female	73.91% 34
Male	26.09% 12
Total	46

Q5: What is your age?

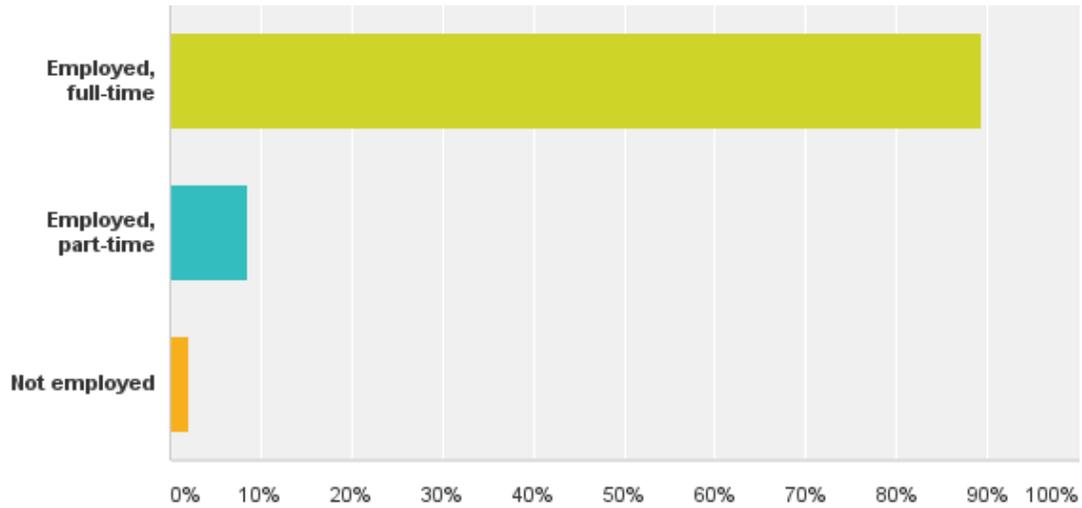
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
20-29	0.00% 0
30-39	36.96% 17
40-49	39.13% 18
50-59	23.91% 11
60-older	0.00% 0
Total	46

Q6: Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

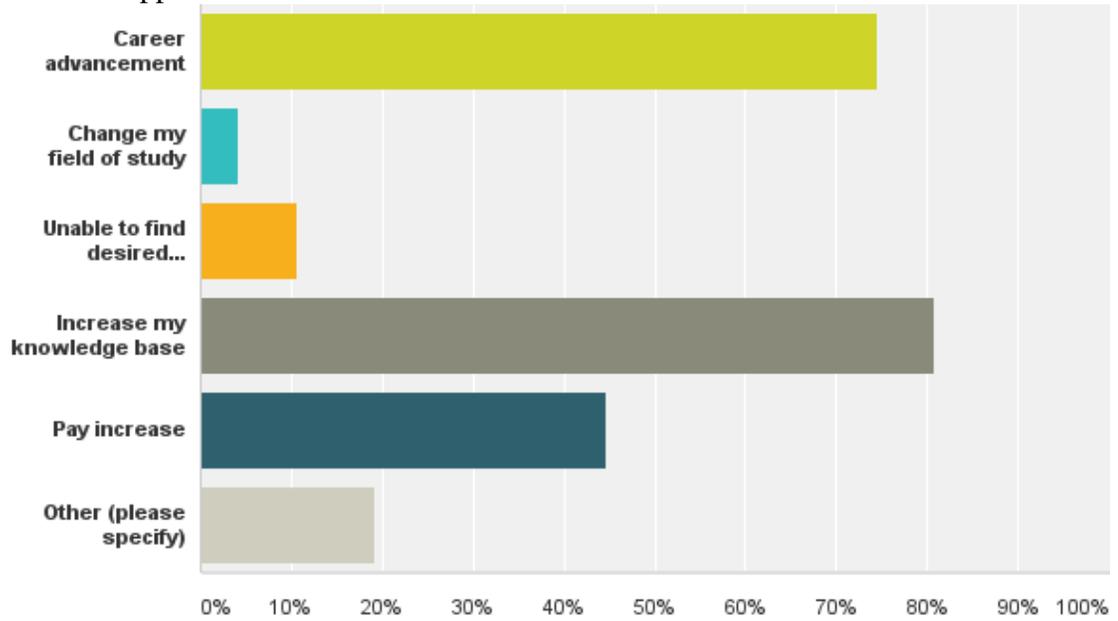
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Employed, full-time	89.36% 42
Employed, part-time	8.51% 4
Not employed	2.13% 1
Total	47

**Q7: Which of the following factors influenced your decision to pursue a doctoral degree?
(Check all that apply)**

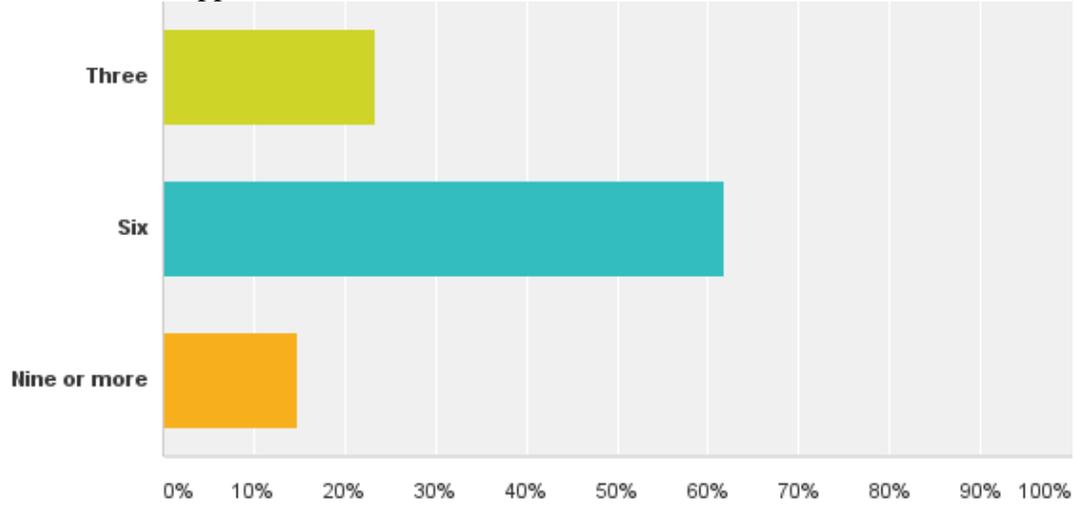
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Career advancement	74.47% 35
Change my field of study	4.26% 2
Unable to find desired employment	10.64% 5
Increase my knowledge base	80.85% 38
Pay increase	44.68% 21
Other (please specify)	19.15% 9
Total Respondents: 47	

Q8: I typically enroll in _____ credit hours a semester:

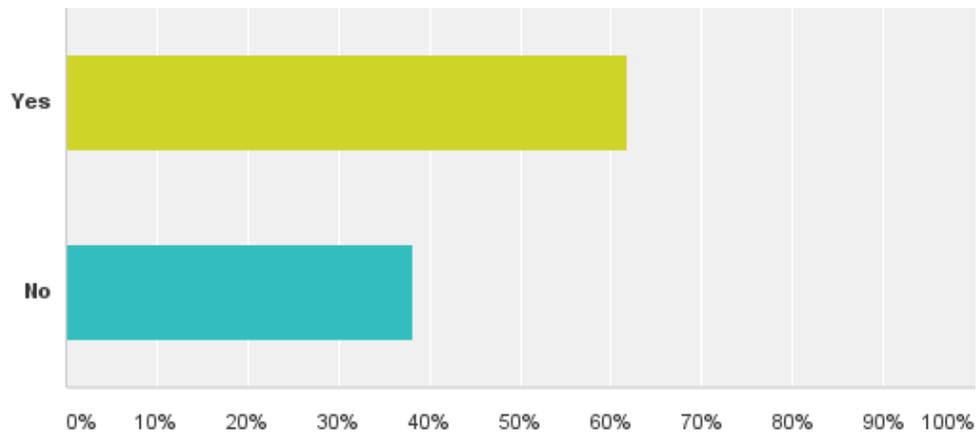
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Three	23.40% 11
Six	61.70% 29
Nine or more	14.89% 7
Total	47

Q9: Are you a parent of a dependent child/children or primary caregiver for another person?

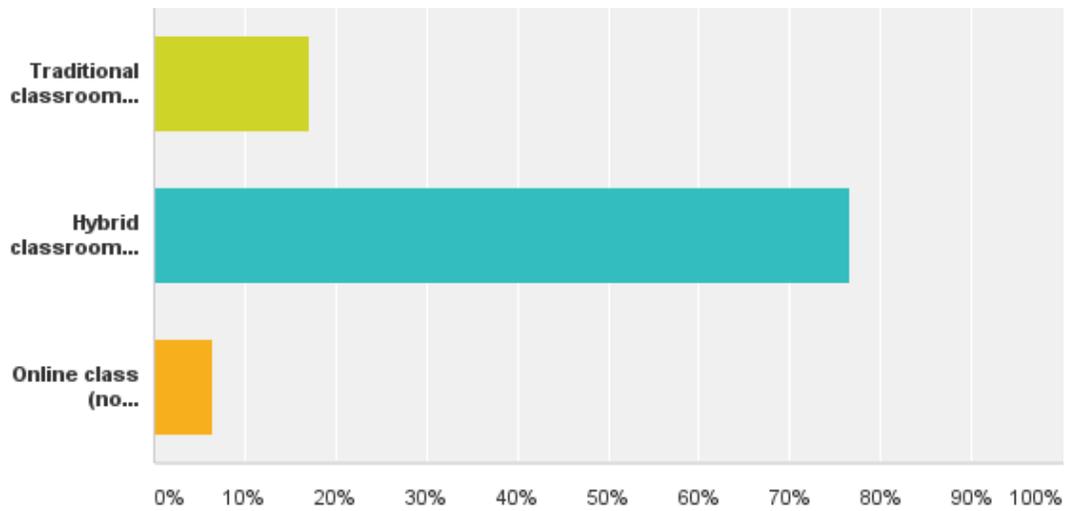
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	61.70% 29
No	38.30% 18
Total	47

Q10: Which instructional style do you prefer? (Check only one)

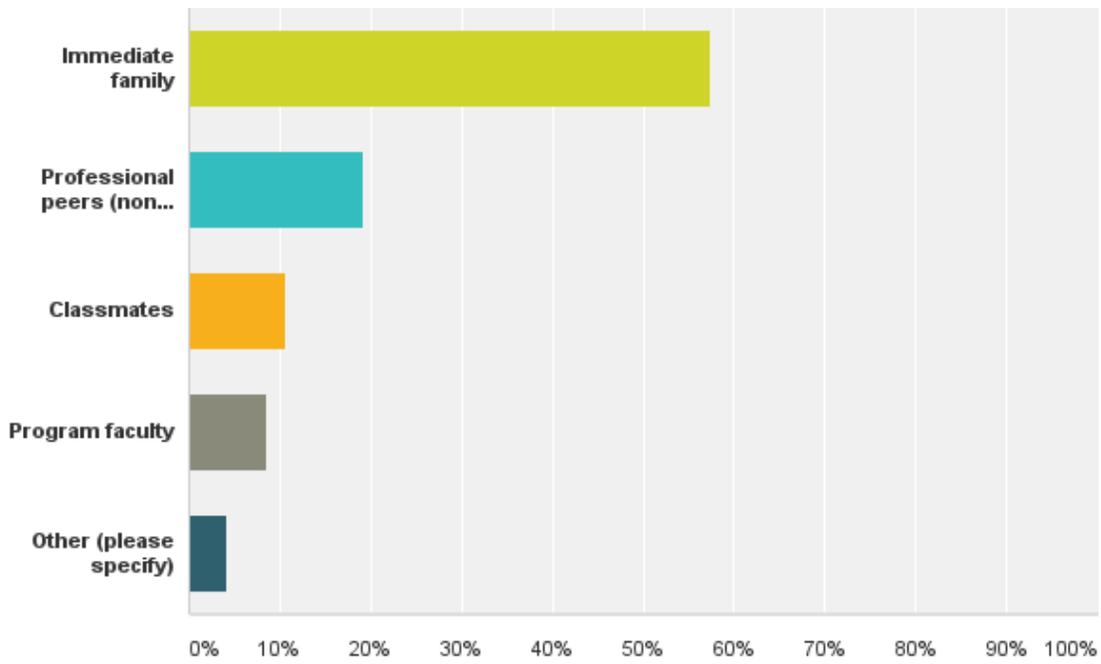
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Traditional classroom (face-to-face)	17.02% 8
Hybrid classroom (online and face-to-face)	76.60% 36
Online class (no face-to-face)	6.38% 3
Total	47

Q11: My primary support network consists of:

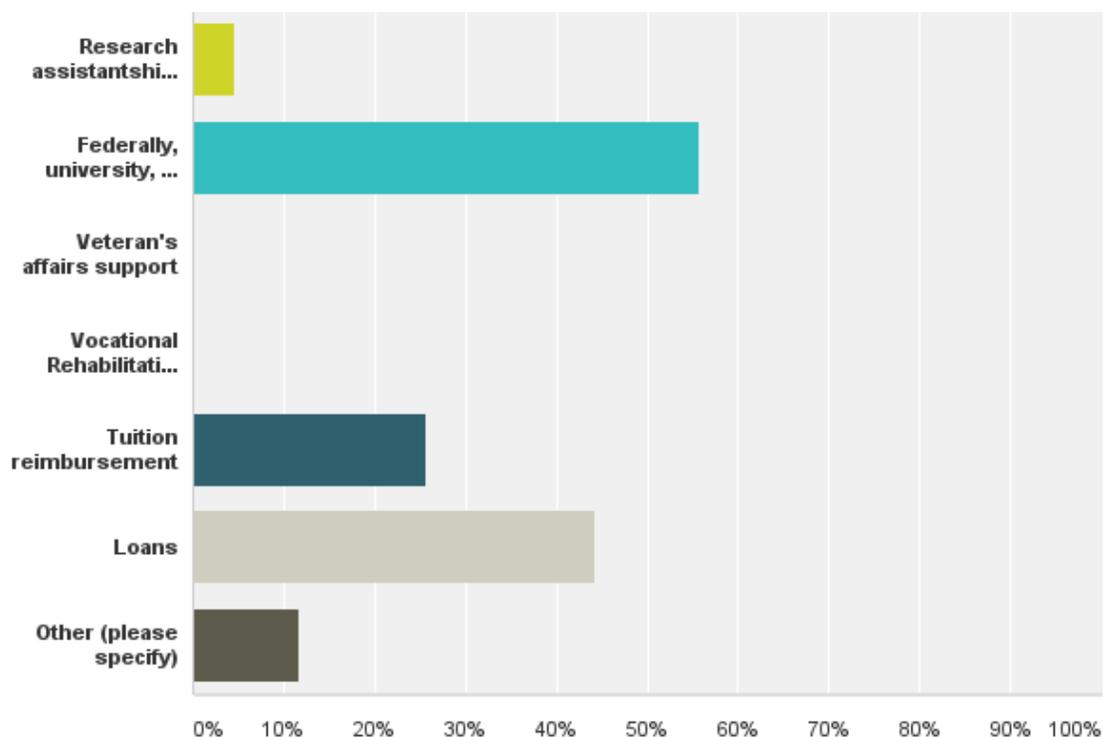
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Immediate family	57.45% 27
Professional peers (non classmates)	19.15% 9
Classmates	10.64% 5
Program faculty	8.51% 4
Other (please specify)	4.26% 2
Total	47

**Q12: What type(s) of financial aid have you received while pursuing your doctoral degree?
(Check all that apply)**

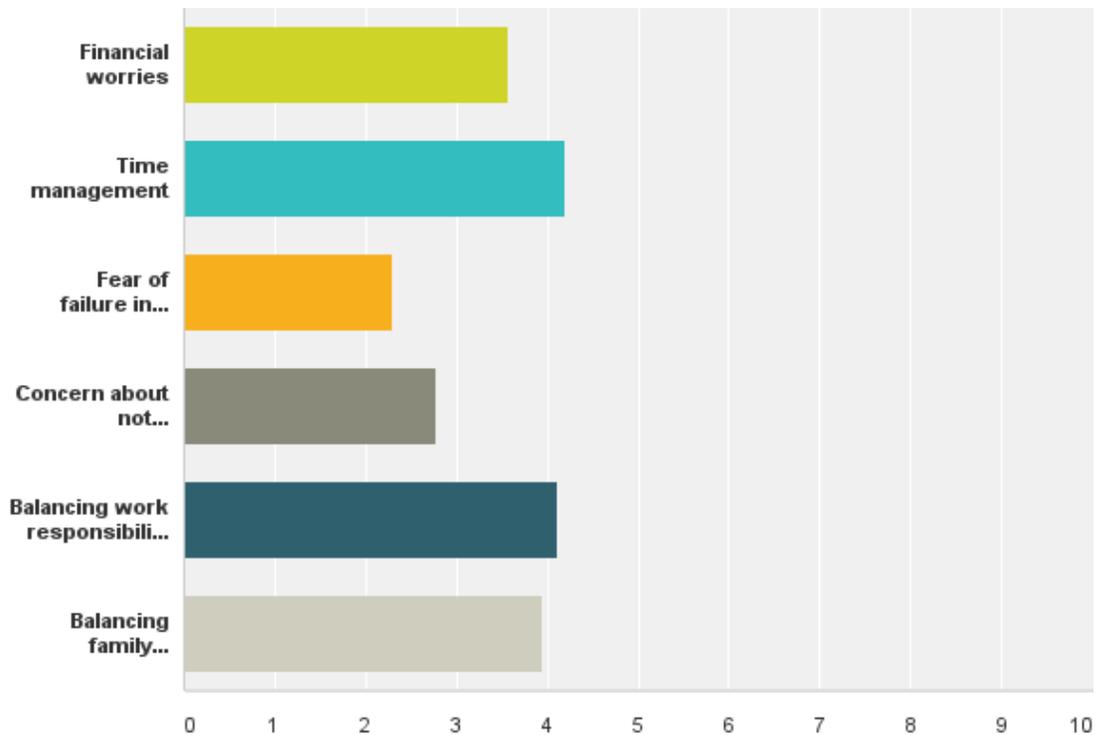
Answered: 43 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses
Research assistantship/graduate assistantship/teaching assistantship	4.65% 2
Federally, university, or privately funded fellowship/scholarship/award/tuition waiver	55.81% 24
Veteran's affairs support	0.00% 0
Vocational Rehabilitation Services support	0.00% 0
Tuition reimbursement	25.58% 11
Loans	44.19% 19
Other (please specify)	11.63% 5
Total Respondents: 43	

Q13: To what extent do the following factors contribute to your stress while pursuing your doctoral degree?

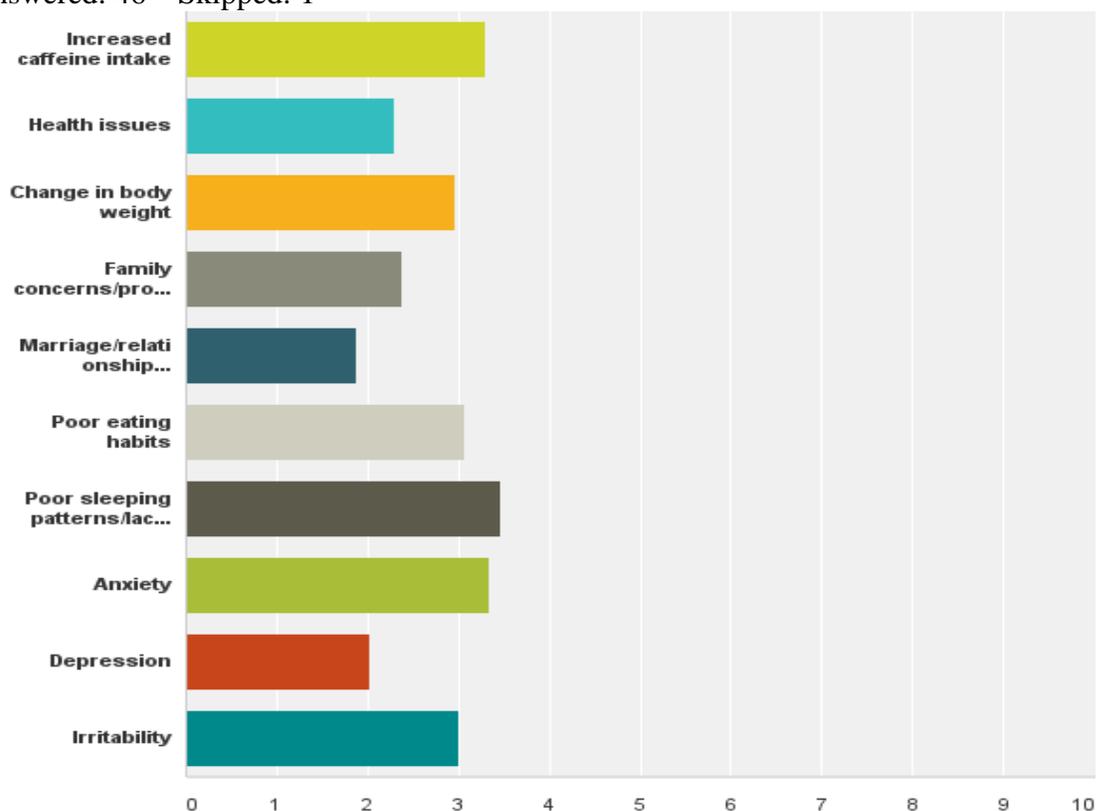
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



	Never	(no label)	Sometimes	(no label)	Often	Total	Weighted Average
Financial worries	6.38% 3	10.64% 5	34.04% 16	17.02% 8	31.91% 15	47	3.57
Time management	0.00% 0	2.17% 1	23.91% 11	26.09% 12	47.83% 22	46	4.20
Fear of failure in coursework	27.66% 13	36.17% 17	21.28% 10	8.51% 4	6.38% 3	47	2.30
Concern about not accomplishing your academic goals	17.02% 8	25.53% 12	29.79% 14	19.15% 9	8.51% 4	47	2.77
Balancing work responsibilities	2.13% 1	4.26% 2	21.28% 10	25.53% 12	46.81% 22	47	4.11
Balancing family responsibilities	6.38% 3	10.64% 5	14.89% 7	19.15% 9	48.94% 23	47	3.94

Q14: Please indicate the extent to which you have experienced any of the following as a result of your participation in the Ed.D. Program:

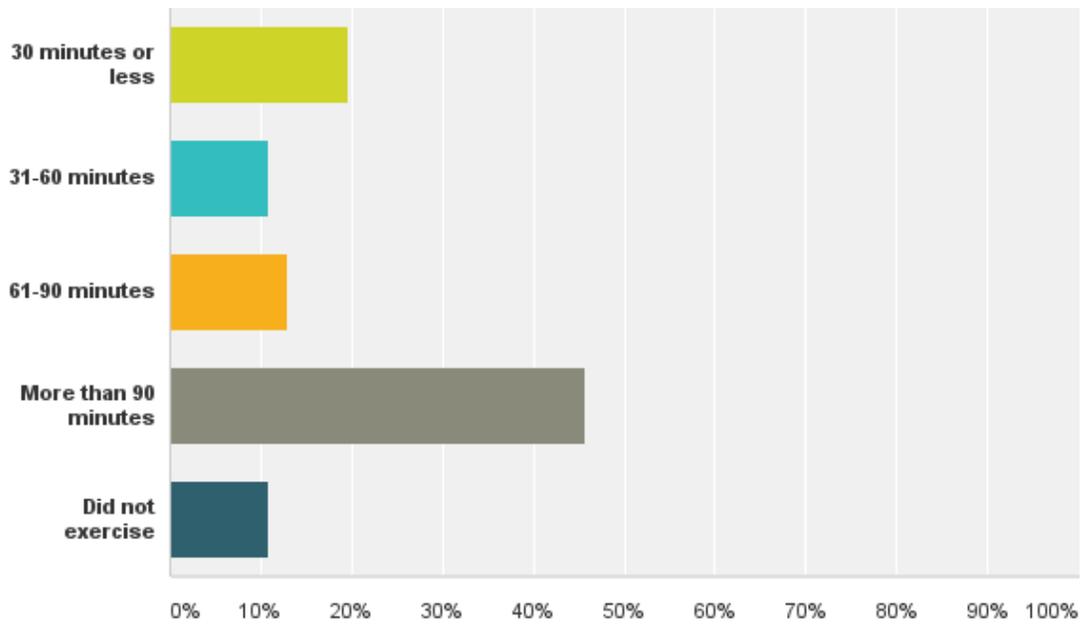
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



	Never	(no label)	Sometimes	(no label)	Often	Total	Weighted Average
Increased caffeine intake	17.39% 8	10.87% 5	19.57% 9	28.26% 13	23.91% 11	46	3.30
Health issues	36.96% 17	19.57% 9	21.74% 10	19.57% 9	2.17% 1	46	2.30
Change in body weight	28.26% 13	15.22% 7	10.87% 5	23.91% 11	21.74% 10	46	2.96
Family concerns/problems	28.26% 13	26.09% 12	32.61% 15	6.52% 3	6.52% 3	46	2.37
Marriage/relationship concerns/programs	45.65% 21	28.26% 13	19.57% 9	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	46	1.87
Poor eating habits	17.39% 8	21.74% 10	17.39% 8	23.91% 11	19.57% 9	46	3.07
Poor sleeping patterns/lack of sleep	6.52% 3	13.04% 6	30.43% 14	28.26% 13	21.74% 10	46	3.46
Anxiety	8.70% 4	10.87% 5	36.96% 17	26.09% 12	17.39% 8	46	3.33
Depression	43.48% 20	21.74% 10	26.09% 12	6.52% 3	2.17% 1	46	2.02
Irritability	8.70% 4	13.04% 6	47.83% 22	30.43% 14	0.00% 0	46	3.00

Q15: Prior to enrolling in the doctoral program, how long did you exercise each week?

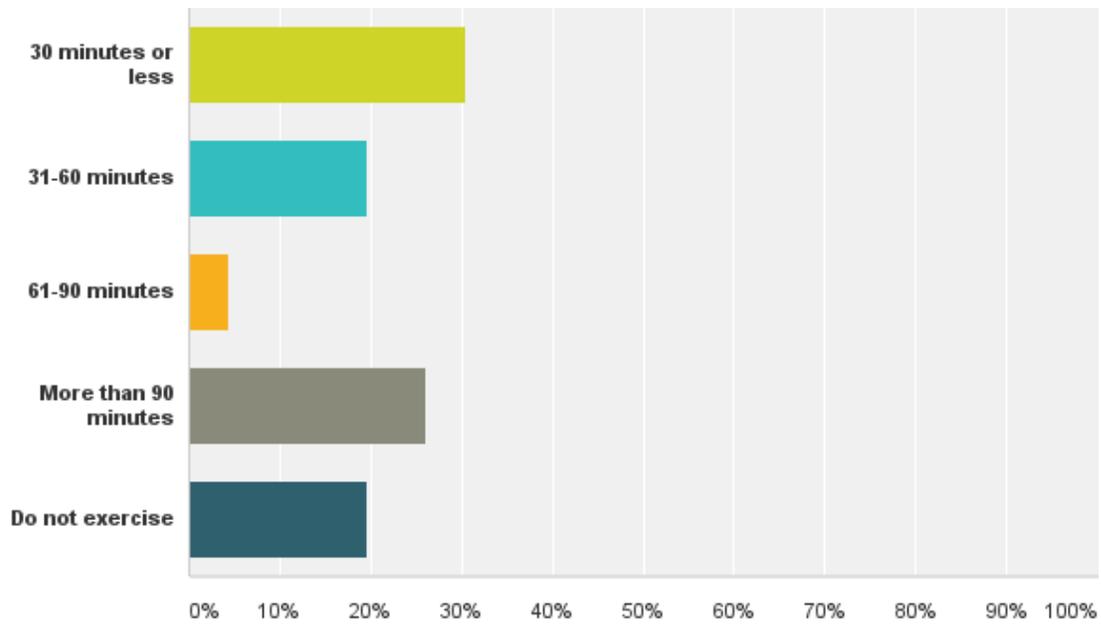
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
30 minutes or less	19.57% 9
31-60 minutes	10.87% 5
61-90 minutes	13.04% 6
More than 90 minutes	45.65% 21
Did not exercise	10.87% 5
Total	46

Q16: Currently, how long do you exercise a week?

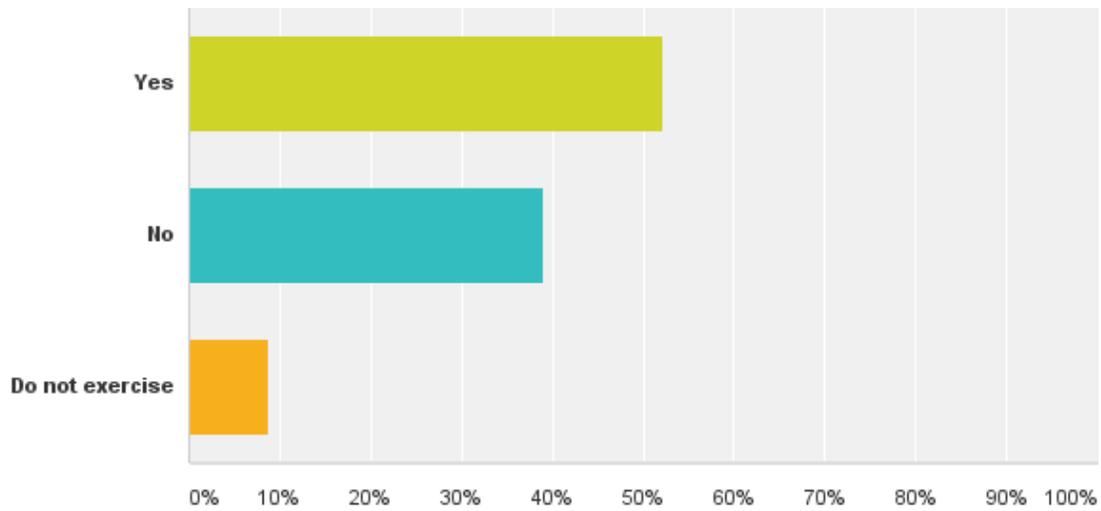
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
30 minutes or less	30.43% 14
31-60 minutes	19.57% 9
61-90 minutes	4.35% 2
More than 90 minutes	26.09% 12
Do not exercise	19.57% 9
Total	46

Q17: Do your student responsibilities prevent you from exercising?

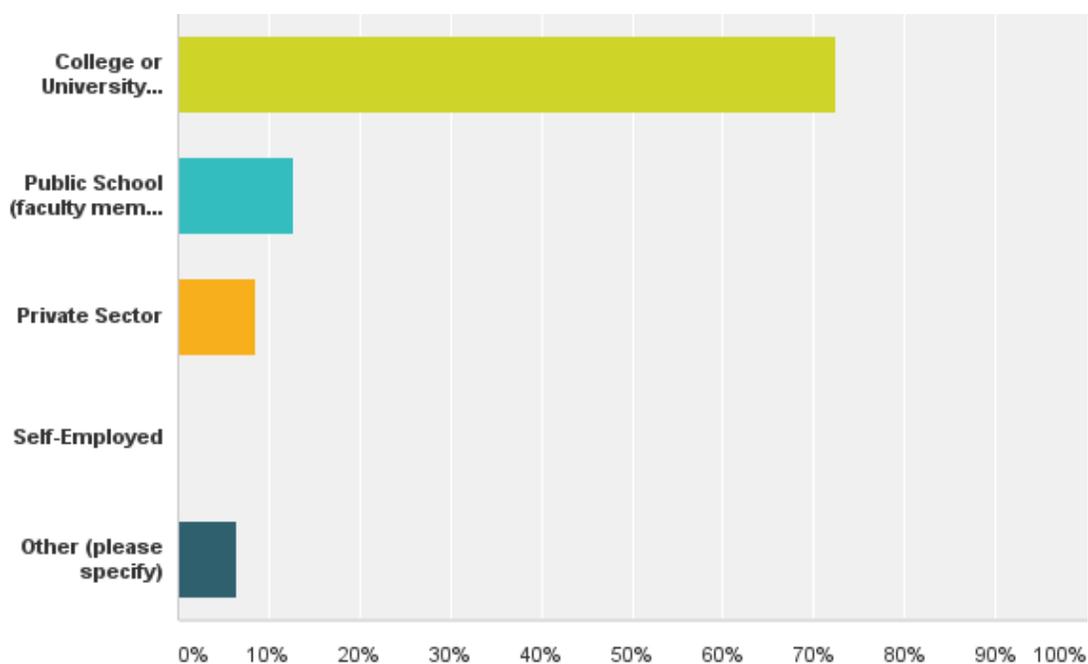
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	52.17% 24
No	39.13% 18
Do not exercise	8.70% 4
Total	46

Q18: What type of position do you hope to hold/obtain after completing your doctoral degree?

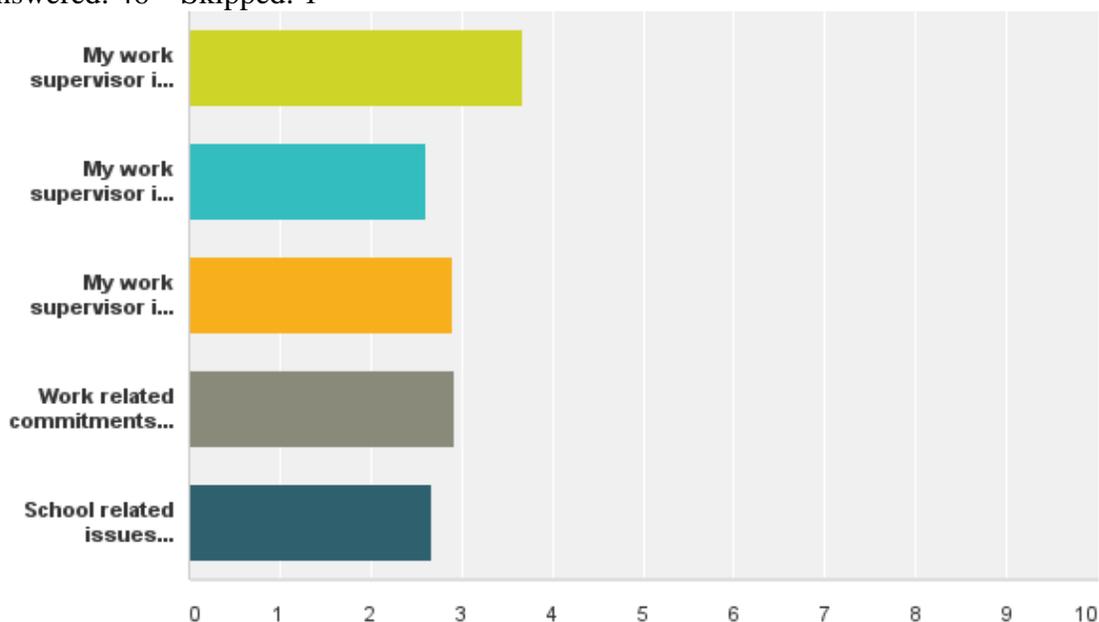
Answered: 47 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
College or University (faculty member or administrator)	72.34% 34
Public School (faculty member or administrator)	12.77% 6
Private Sector	8.51% 4
Self-Employed	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	6.38% 3
Total	47

Q19: Using the scale provided, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

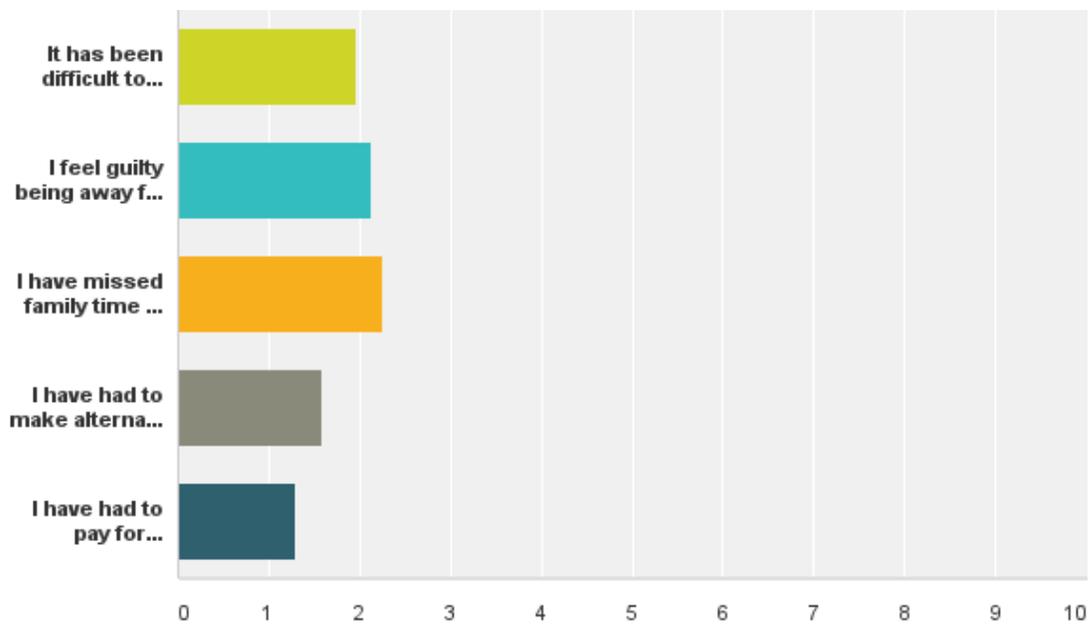
Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Employed	Total	Weighted Average
My work supervisor is supportive of me furthering my education.	2.17% 1	4.35% 2	21.74% 10	67.39% 31	4.35% 2	46	3.67
My work supervisor is supportive of me using work time to attend class or work on my coursework.	19.57% 9	26.09% 12	32.61% 15	17.39% 8	4.35% 2	46	2.61
My work supervisor is supportive of me taking time off to attend class.	10.87% 5	17.39% 8	45.65% 21	21.74% 10	4.35% 2	46	2.91
Work related commitments interfere with school commitments.	10.87% 5	21.74% 10	34.78% 16	28.26% 13	4.35% 2	46	2.93
School related issues interfere with my work responsibilities/performance.	10.87% 5	32.61% 15	39.13% 18	13.04% 6	4.35% 2	46	2.67

Q20: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements as they relate to your role as a student in the doctoral program.

Answered: 46 Skipped: 1



	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Total	Weighted Average
It has been difficult to be away from my family .	23.91% 11	56.52% 26	19.57% 9	46	1.96
I feel guilty being away from my family .	17.39% 8	52.17% 24	30.43% 14	46	2.13
I have missed family time due to class or coursework .	15.22% 7	43.48% 20	41.30% 19	46	2.26
I have had to make alternate care-giving arrangements .	60.00% 27	22.22% 10	17.78% 8	45	1.58
I have had to pay for alternate care-giving arrangements .	82.22% 37	6.67% 3	11.11% 5	45	1.29

Appendix B

Question 22 Survey Qualitative Responses

1. I wish there was more flexibility in coursework choices and due dates.
2. My husband had major surgery during the time I was taking classes. and I have lost my parents and in-laws during this time period. These issues contributed to me not moving along in the program as I had hoped to do as well as added major anxiety to my life. Difficult to find the balance at times.
3. The MU DOC program is designed to accommodate the full time working professional.
4. Levels of stress have been higher than usual
5. My children are older, and my mother is still in good health, so I am in a pretty good age range.
6. You have to be extremely determined and dedicated to complete the program. It takes away significantly from your personal life. It is not only the student who sacrifices, but the student's family.
7. I have no caregiving responsibilities, so the last two questions should have been N/A.
8. Since tuition has gone up, I think the tuition waiver should also go up.
9. Overall, my experience was very good. I presently have a different full-time position that may make it a bit easier for me to complete course requirements.
10. On-site child care and a gym would be great.

Appendix C

Anonymous Survey Consent

	Marshall University IRB	
	Approved on:	7/27/15
	Expires on:	7/27/18
	Study number:	774804

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*Life in School*” designed to analyze examine the effects of pursuing a doctoral degree on one’s personal life. The study is being conducted by Dr. Ron Childress (PI), Bonnie Bailey (Co-PI), Joshua Cooper (Co-PI), and Jenny Colvin (Co-PI) from Marshall University and has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research is being conducted as part of a class requirement for EDF 711 Survey Research.

This survey is comprised of an online survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not type your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate you can leave the survey site. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Once you complete the survey you can delete your browsing history for added security. Completing the on-line survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply.

If you have any questions about the study you may contact Dr. Ronald Childress (PI) at (304)746-1904 or rchildress@marshall.edu, or co-investigators, Bonnie Bailey at (304) 696-6621 or philli32@marshall.edu, Joshua Cooper at (740) 701-2428 or cooper299@marshall.edu, or Jenny Colvin at (304) 617-3221 or crews4@marshall.edu.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey you are also confirming that you are **18** years of age or older.

Please print this page for your records.

If you choose to participate in the study you will find the survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LV65KVM>

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

Appendix D

IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205

IRB2 #00003206

July 27, 2015

Ronald Childress, EdD
College of Education and Professional Development

RE: IRBNet ID# 774804-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Childress:

Protocol Title: [774804-1] Life in School

Expiration Date: July 27, 2016

Site Location: MUGC

Submission Type: New Project APPROVED

Review Type: Expedited Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire July 27, 2016. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Bonnie Bailey.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Appendix E

Survey Instrument

Please respond to each of the following questions:

1. Degree program currently enrolled in:

- Ed.D. Educational Leadership
- Ed.D. Curriculum & Instruction

2. Which of the following best describes your current status in the Ed.D. Program?

- Have required coursework to complete
- Admitted to candidacy (portfolio defended); prospectus not approved
- Prospectus has been approved

3. Are you a member of a cohort?

- Yes
- No

4. Which best describes you?

- Female
- Male

5. What is your age?

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-older

6. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Employed, full-time
 - Employed, part-time
 - Not employed
-

7. Which of the following factors influenced your decision to pursue a doctoral degree? (Check all that apply)

- Career advancement
- Change my field of study
- Unable to find desired employment
- Increase my knowledge base
- Pay increase
- Other (please specify)

8. I typically enroll in _____ credit hours a semester:

- Three
- Six
- Nine or more

9. Are you a parent of a dependent child/children or primary caregiver for another person?

- Yes
- No

10. Which instructional style do you prefer? (Check only one)

- Traditional classroom (face-to-face)
- Hybrid classroom (online and face-to-face)
- Online class (no face-to-face)

11. My primary support network consists of:

- Immediate family
- Professional peers (non classmates)
- Classmates
- Program faculty
- Other (please specify)

12. What type(s) of financial aid have you received while pursuing your doctoral degree? (Check all that apply)

- Research assistantship/graduate assistantship/teaching assistantship
- Federally, university, or privately funded fellowship/scholarship/award/tuition waiver
- Veteran's affairs support
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services support
- Tuition reimbursement
- Loans
- Other (please specify)

13. To what extent do the following factors contribute to your stress while pursuing your doctoral degree?

	Never		Sometimes		Often
Financial worries	<input type="radio"/>				
Time management	<input type="radio"/>				
Fear of failure in coursework	<input type="radio"/>				
Concern about not accomplishing your academic goals	<input type="radio"/>				
Balancing work responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>				
Balancing family responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>				

14. Please indicate the extent to which you have experienced any of the following as a result of your participation in the Ed.D. Program:

	Never		Sometimes		Often
Increased caffeine intake	<input type="radio"/>				
Health issues	<input type="radio"/>				
Change in body weight	<input type="radio"/>				
Family concerns/problems	<input type="radio"/>				
Marriage/relationship concerns/problems	<input type="radio"/>				
Poor eating habits	<input type="radio"/>				
Poor sleeping patterns/lack of sleep	<input type="radio"/>				
Anxiety	<input type="radio"/>				
Depression	<input type="radio"/>				
Irritability	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

15. Prior to enrolling in the doctoral program, how long did you exercise each week?

- 30 minutes or less
- 31-60 minutes
- 61-90 minutes
- More than 90 minutes
- Did not exercise

16. Currently, how long do you exercise a week?

- 30 minutes or less
- 31-60 minutes
- 61-90 minutes
- More than 90 minutes
- Do not exercise

17. Do your student responsibilities prevent you from exercising?

- Yes
- No
- Do not exercise

18. What type of position do you hope to hold/obtain after completing your doctoral degree?

- College or University (faculty member or administrator)
- Public School (faculty member or administrator)
- Private Sector
- Self-Employed
- Other (please specify)

19. Using the scale provided, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Employed
My work supervisor is supportive of me furthering my education.	<input type="radio"/>				
My work supervisor is supportive of me using work time to attend class or work on my coursework.	<input type="radio"/>				
My work supervisor is supportive of me taking time off to attend class.	<input type="radio"/>				
Work related commitments interfere with school commitments.	<input type="radio"/>				
School related issues interfere with my work responsibilities/performance.	<input type="radio"/>				

20. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements as they relate to your role as a student in the doctoral program.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
It has been difficult to be away from my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel guilty being away from my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have missed family time due to class or coursework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had to make alternate care-giving arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had to pay for alternate care-giving arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Please provide any additional feedback regarding any issues related to "Life in School" you have faced while pursuing your doctoral degree.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey.