

**School of Educational Studies**  
**Educational Leadership**  
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Degree Program(s) Assessed	Assessment Methods	Number of Individuals Assessed
<i>EdD in School Administration</i>	Qualitative data were gathered at the end of the Fall 02 and Spring 03 semesters using a series of open ended questions. Responses were either returned in hardcopy during class or by email.	28

**Analysis and Findings:**

Purpose

These data were gathered in an effort to gain a sense of student perceptions and experiences within the cohort system begun in the Fall of 2002. Organizing EDLE doctoral students into cohorts is designed to facilitate student learning and improve the efficiency of course scheduling.

Method

A series of open-ended questions were asked of current doctoral students in School Administration. Two separate cohorts were included in the survey. The OSU-Stillwater cohort has 16 students and the OSU-Tulsa cohort has 12 students, for a total of 28 students surveyed. Students were surveyed both at the end of the Fall 2002 semester and at the end of the Spring 2004 semester. Responses were accepted both in hardcopy form and by email. Data were transcribed with the assistance of the office staff of the School of Educational Studies. There were a total of 37 responses from the two data collection periods.

Findings

Analysis of the data indicated that students felt positive about the following:

- Support from other students
- Closeness to or bonding with classmates
- Opportunity to form professional networks
- A sense of trust between cohort members and faculty
- Value of the learning atmosphere created by the cohort model

The data analysis showed two areas common to cohorts that were perceived as negative by students. First, very often a cohort will have one student with a forceful personality who tends to dominate class discussion and activities. One of the cohorts reported this phenomenon while the other did not. Second, students in both cohorts reported a sense of frustration with lack of information on the processes and procedures for moving through doctoral study. This has generally been found to be a product of "group think," experiencing an close, supportive environment characterized by open communication between students, fails to establish a close bond with the program assigned advisor, and instead relies on information that is presented to the group.

**Uses of Assessment Results:**

**The positive and negative aspects of the use of the cohort model in doctoral study identified in the data analysis may be found in the cohort research literature. While none are surprising, the positive perceptions must continue to be supported by all faculty delivering courses and the negative perceptions must be attended to with improvement to or changes within the program.**

## **Recommendations**

- **This type of assessment should be extended to the Higher Education doctoral cohorts.**
- **Separate survey instruments should be created for gathering data at the following points:**
  - **End of first year of study**
  - **End of second year of study**
  - **Before the qualifying examination is taken**
  - **After defense of proposal**
  - **Upon successful defense of the dissertation**
- **A student handbook should be designed specifically for EDLE doctoral cohorts.**
- **Better communication must be established between each students and their advisor/chair.**