

Degrees of Meaning and the Meaning of Degrees

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In an effort to understand the meaning of a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, a qualitative inquiry was launched. An exercise in case study, a purposeful sampling was utilized, consisting of FAU doctoral students and professors within the Educational Leadership department; interviews and observations were performed and literature published by the department was analyzed. The study attempted to determine the motivation of those who pursue the degree, the meaning of the degree as viewed through the eyes of the participants, and how this meaning may or may not have changed over time. Findings suggest that those who pursue the degree do so because of a Love of Learning, Career Advancement, and Personal Challenge. It should be noted that a second study in this area may necessitate a revisiting of the questions to better differentiate between the *meaning* of the degree and the *motivation* in acquiring one. A further recommendation of this study would be that the department conduct similar studies periodically to ensure proper alignment of the stated goals of the department with the perception of professors and students who comprise it.