

Title: An Examination of the Perceived Effect of Cohort Study Groups on
the Success of Students Enrolled in an Accelerated Master's
Program

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Authors: Dr. Sandra Rasberry
Dr. Dorothy Stokes
Dr. Claudia Nisbett

Affiliation: Belhaven College

Mailing Address for all Authors:
Belhaven College
1500 Peachtree Street Box 315
Jackson, MS 39202

E-mail: srasberry@belhaven.edu; dstokes@belhaven.edu; cnisbett@belhaven.edu

Phone Number: 601-968-8703

Fax Number: 601-968-9998

An Examination of the Perceived Effect of Cohort Study Groups on the Success of Students Enrolled in an Accelerated Master's Program

This study is intended to analyze the effectiveness of cohort study groups upon completion of an accelerated master's program. This study will also examine the perceived benefits to students in the concentrated program as compared to benefits of courses taken by a more traditional format. Data will also be examined to determine what impact, if any, the integration of a Christian World View had upon a student's personal philosophy of teaching and leadership within the school and community.

The students in this study were enrolled in an accelerated master's of education program. The format of each course was 7 four-hour class sessions and 1 three-hour cohort study session per week.

Data will be collected from the following: (1) end of course survey, (2) graduate exit exam, (3) individual interviews, and (4) survey to each graduate.

Each small study group-rating instrument is being used to determine how effective the small group experiences were perceived by each member. Comments from graduates on exit interviews and survey responses will be analyzed to compare the benefits of the accelerated program to a more traditional program.

Expected outcomes include determining the success of an accelerated master's program upon the academic, professional and leadership skills of graduates of the program. The cohort study groups are expected to contribute to the overall success of the graduates. The integration of the Christian World View should positively influence the student's view toward their role as a leader within the classroom, school and community.

Preliminary findings from study group evaluation forms indicate a positive effect in several areas. The analysis to date has indicated the following conclusions:

1. Sharing the assignments of the study groups enabled the students to synergize a variety of ideas, opinions, and talents.
2. Discussions within the study groups reinforced ideas from both the classroom lectures as well as outside research.
3. The collaboration, which was needed to complete course requirements, could be applied to working with other teachers in a school setting.
4. Group dynamics and learning styles were reinforced in a positive way encouraging students to integrate these skills into instructional settings.

5. The integration of the Christian World View allowed student to operate at their conscious level by examining their presuppositions to life and reality.

6. Leadership skills developed through cohort presentations and projects were transferable to leadership roles in individual schools and communities.

A survey addressing the Christian World View's influence on leadership and philosophy of teaching was sent to all graduates. Results of this survey will be examined to determine what impact, if any, integration of the Christian World View had on the graduate's personal philosophy concerning teaching values and morals in schools of today. Data will also be analyzed to compare satisfaction of courses taught in a traditional graduate program with one in accelerated format.