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Gaining Research Competence: Qualitative Investigations into Doctoral Success and Failure in Finland, the United States and Estonia

This presentation offers results from a three year investigation of 60 doctoral completers and drop-outs from six universities. The presentation will begin with general data regarding common curricular, advisement, and completion data. Attention will then be given to the personal constraints, issues, competing demands, and do or die situations common to the doctoral experience. Results will be reported regarding factors of completers, how one accepts the mission and role of researcher, how topics are held in the minds of researchers and ultimately made one's own. Finally, suggestions are made regarding how to push the higher education pedagogy literature forward, and how to better equip doctoral programs with new paradigms for investigation and practice.