

The Ph.D., the Psy.D, and Degree-Model Match

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Background and History (Maryka Biaggio)

To set the context for our discussion, I'd like to make a few remarks about background and history. I think questions about degree-model match devolve to basic considerations about the philosophy of education in professional psychology.

The very fact that different models have evolved (often out of dissatisfaction with prevailing approaches) clearly demonstrates that there are differences of opinion about how professional psychology education should take place. Actually, the latitude that the current accreditation standards permit with respect to model respects these differences by allowing programs to articulate their own training model, within certain parameters.

One of the most central questions with respect to training model differences bears on the relationship between training for research and for practice, or the role of research training in professional programs. In a 1991 article, D. Peterson makes explicit what many, though certainly not all educators, believe: "(D)ifferent forms of education are required to prepare people for careers of research, in the one case, or careers of professional service, in the other case" (p. 422).

If we look at the evolution of psychology training models, we see that debate over the respective places of research and practice training have been the dominant theme.

According to D. Peterson (1991) education for the practice of psychology has gone through three distinct phases: preprofessional; scientist-practitioner; and professional (D. Peterson, 1991).

D. Peterson contends that for the first 65 years of the profession, psychologists who went on to practice were basically educated as scientists and received no systematic preparation for professional work. This changed, however, after WWII, when demands for clinicians prompted changes in funding for training and led to an examination within the profession of the standard training approach. Specifically, the Shakow and Boulder Conferences proposed a new model of training, known as the scientist-practitioner, and ushered in the second phase of education.

By the 1960s some dissatisfaction with this approach emerged, on the grounds that the Boulder model provided insufficient training for practice. The 1973 Vail Conference offered the most public and focused critique of the scientist-practitioner model and articulated an alternative, the professional model, which has come to be

known by a variety of names. This professional phase of training saw the birth of Psy.D. programs, the first initiated by Don Peterson at University of Illinois in 1968. Interestingly, the first free-standing professional school, the California School of Professional Psychology, founded in 1969, initially offered only the Ph.D. It wasn't until WASC, the regional accrediting body for California, changed its guidelines for the doctoral degree that CSPP and other California programs began offering the Psy.D.. So there is precedent here for an accrediting body having standards for doctoral degree types.

D. Peterson contends that views of the relationship between research and practice changed during the three phases of education. In the preprofessional phase the linkage between science and practice was assumed to be fairly direct. During the scientist-practitioner phase, a more reciprocal relationship was assumed. But Peterson holds that the relationship is more complex than granted by the assumption of reciprocity and that science and practice differ in fundamental ways.

The professional approach to education basically embraced this view, moving practice training to the forefront while retaining an approach to research training in the service of practice. The local clinical scientist perspective is perhaps the best exemplar of this perspective.

One can debate (as the profession will no doubt continue to do) the relationship between science and practice (and some of the articles in the bibliography offer good discussions of this, most notably the two articles lead-authored by R. Peterson).

But the fact remains that training models and programs vary with respect to their position on this question. The conclusion that different models are necessary in view of the variety of perspectives on education is inescapable. In fact, I take the very existence of both scientist-practitioner and practitioner-scholar programs as proof that it is not realistic (for a variety of reasons, time and economics, the most obvious) to do it all in one program, that is, to maintain a balanced, intensive, and extensive focus on both research training and practitioner training.

We now have a variety of Boulder model programs, each with its particular model, and a wide range of Vail model programs, each with its own nuanced articulation on the practitioner-scholar theme. And it is also true that there is a great deal of overlap in the actual training practices in these varied programs.

So we must ask:

Do certain models match better with the Ph.D. and Psy.D. degrees? One way to approach this question is examine outcomes for the different model types.

A 2000 study by Cherry, Messenger, and Jacoby assessed outcomes for three different program types on a number of variables: the clinical scientist (a model focused on the

production and application of scientific research to clinical problems), scientist-practitioner, and practitioner-scholar.

Some highlights of significant findings:

Research: Median % of students engaged in research and article authorship was higher in clinical scientist than the other two types of programs. The number of faculty in clinical scientist programs engaged in research was slightly higher than number in scientist-practitioner programs which in turn was higher than number in practitioner-scholar programs.

For service delivery, faculty from practitioner-scholar programs engaged in more professional service delivery than faculty from the other two models' programs. Interestingly, there were no differences among students in service delivery across the program types.

In terms of graduates' employment, the clearest difference emerged for graduates of clinical scientist programs, with higher proportions of them finding employment in academia than students from the other two program types.

There were no significant differences among the three programs for either students or faculty in professional organization membership.

All in all, this study found that program outcomes did vary as expected in accordance with program type. Although this study did not take degree into consideration, it does of course have some bearing on the question of degree/model match.

So, to conclude, one idea that occurs to me is it might be possible for the CoA to employ research along these lines to identify thresholds or ranges for variables along which different models and degrees might be expected to vary.

That's all I want to say on history and background.

Stakeholders and Issues

What groups have a stake in the degree/model match debate? (program applicants; faculty, programs, sponsoring institutions; APA and other professional organizations; the public; accrediting and credentialing bodies)

Who does/should have control over program models and degrees? What are appropriate roles for regional and professional accrediting bodies?

Are there good reasons to have some guidelines for degree/model match? What are the key issues to consider in formulating any guidelines?

Tensions and Sources of Confusion

Do different stakeholders have different opinions as to the desirability of degree/model match guidelines? Is there any common ground?