EDITORIAL

Developing the Evidence Base for Training and Education in Professional Psychology

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The changing of the cover color of Training and Education in Professional Psychology (TEPP) connotes a change in the editorial team. In making the transition, we greatly appreciate the efforts of the inaugural editorial team for their significant activities in establishing the journal: Emil Rodolfa, Debora Bell, Kathleen Bieschke, Claytie Davis III, Roger Peterson, and later, Robert Hatcher. The field expresses collective thanks for their vision and excellent work. We also acknowledge the contributions of the authors and cadre of reviewers in creating and shaping the content over six volumes. Rodolfa (2006), in the inaugural issue of this journal, articulated that TEPP would be “a professional forum that will allow members of our profession to contribute to the professional dialogues” (p. 1). TEPP is developing a strong tradition and will continue to evolve over time as its influence on the process of preparing professional psychologists becomes increasingly clear. We value the opportunity to serve as editors to move TEPP forward in impacting the discipline and profession of psychology. TEPP reflects not only the education and training community but also the multifaceted world in which the educational process takes trainees through the stages of predoctoral, doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral preparation occurs. TEPP can be a catalytic resource as the educational community moves away from “model
wars” to a truly integrated system of education. The professional psychology field and TEPP, in particular, need to be ever-changing and responsive to adapt to new challenges, develop a research-evaluative conceptualization of the field, and create effective evidence-based ways to prepare the next generations of professional psychologists. As a team, we will endeavor to facilitate this integration, rather than division, while attempting to identify and extend the field for the profession to serve the various publics. We want to continue establishing TEPP’s tradition as a forum for fair and balanced presentations of important issues, including controversial ones, as they arise. We promise to work together with the educational constituencies toward advancing scholarship and the utility of the journal for students and trainers.

By applying quality standards for submissions, we will work with authors to help the field define itself, assisting them to make the best presentations possible while simultaneously not being overly intrusive or changing the intent and voice of their writing. Our approach to editing will be as members of the field itself; we hope to approach this task as thoughtful readers, careful evaluators, and prompt responders. It is important to provide constructive and balanced reviews and diplomatic, but straightforward, review letters to improve the presentation and content, even with multiple revisions.

TEPP will gain input from a diverse set of new and seasoned professionals, and from a variety of conceptual, educational, and practice orientations in order to reflect the field. We seek open-minded reviewers who possess the ability to apply quality standards to the writing and evaluation of contributions to the literature, and are committed to serving the education and training community through its flagship publication.

As an editorial team, we consider the most critical concern for the field to be the development of a stronger evidence base for training practices. TEPP should be a leader in encouraging these developments, soliciting authors and publishing critical analyses and studies of different practices being implemented. These should include, but are not limited to, discussions of professional ethics, standards and guidelines, education and training processes, measurement and assessment, preparation for credentialing and licensure, and best practices at all levels of training. Whenever possible, these need to be built on an evidence-based approach. Thus, we seek submissions that benefit the education community and profession, and that enhance the ability of the graduates of our programs to provide quality services to the public. We especially want to encourage behavioral measurements of the educational process and training outcomes on small and large scales. For example, these could include evaluations of competence training and evaluations of implementation of various forms and formats for measuring competencies. Overall, we believe that the field will be served best through training descriptions with data-based evaluations of educational process and outcomes.

In addition to publishing articles that enhance the evidence base for training practices, this journal can be a forum for opinions, policy pieces, discussions of proposed action and perceived implications, and dissemination of thoughtful reports from collaborating groups and training councils. As a scientific discipline, it is particularly important to reflect this orientation in the premiere (and only) education and training outlet for professional psychology.

A notable feature of the field, as reflected in TEPP, to this point has been the number of articles reporting surveys. As the survey response rates have decreased in the field, and the manner of sampling appears to have become restricted, there are concerns about representativeness of the samples and the conclusions that can be drawn. Although suggestive, surveys often do not sufficiently capture the behaviors of trainers and trainees as they engage in developing professional competencies. We will not limit survey reports, but we ask authors to provide justification for population sampling issues and for any generalizations drawn from survey results, particularly those that utilize obviously restricted groups or participants.

The editorial team will develop new sections and special calls to invigorate discussions and submissions. These might include innovation reports/profiles, analyses, and commentaries of issues and trends. We have already formed special topical sections and special issues to help capture and advance developments on a variety of topics. These include open calls for submissions on (a) Prepracticum Training for Professional Psychology, (b) Ethical Issues in Education and Training, (c) Postdoctoral Training in Professional Psychology, and (d) Outcomes of Supervision. More will be announced over time through training council listservs and on the Web site of the American Psychological Association (APA).

A review of journal publications on education and training in other professions reveals respect for the scholarly examination of professional education and educational initiatives. The issues are often common and cross-cutting for the different disciplines and professions. These journals also provide some comparison of the value other professions give to academic productivity of this type. We hope to see such scholarship raised to the esteem given in psychology to theoretically based, empirical research publications in other APA journals. We encourage program faculty and directors to apply psychological research methodology to their innovative efforts and submit it for publication in TEPP.

In 1972, Thoreson, Krauskopf, McAleer, and Wenger (1972) worried that education in applied psychology would become a “buggy whip factory, interesting and nostalgic but totally useless” (p. 134). The field is again in the midst of change; there is renewed concern about the future of the profession. TEPP needs to reflect and support the necessary changes such that our training and education endeavors are not buggy whip factories. As the current editorial team, we endorse Rodolfa’s (2006) aspiration for the new journal: “We hope you will consider submitting your ideas, your research projects, and your theories to TEPP to help our training and education improve and our profession enhance its services to the public” (p. 2). As our field seeks to produce competent psychologists capable of serving the public, now and in the future, by adaptation, advancements, and, when necessary, by change, we want to convey our enthusiasm for the journal that fills a distinctive place in all of our endeavors.

References
