The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate

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The Carnegie Project
on the EDUCATION DOCTORATE

By Jill Alexa Perry

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In Short

- Beginning with 21 US schools of education, the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) has created a network of education faculty who are differentiating the EdD from the PhD in order to better meet the needs of their practitioner-scholar students.

- Their discussions center on two questions: "What are the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that professionals working in education should demonstrably have," and ""How do we prepare our students to have them?" Participants then backward-design their programs to develop these competencies.

- Faculty leaders develop ideas nationally and implement them with local variations. The results are programs that differ in their particulars but that share certain aspects of program design. Generally, admissions, course credits and delivery, faculty, student support, and the capstone design all differ from those of the traditional PhD.

"Change in large educational organizations is generally not funded because it is not believed to be possible," said the US Department of Education FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) program officer. We were at our first meeting after being awarded $700,000 to study how the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) had affected schools of education at 21 US universities. He went on to give us examples of several organizational-change failures.

Just as we were convinced he was setting us up for the "be prepared to fail" speech, he said, "Your project is the first I have seen in my tenure at the Department of Ed that is working, because the change is coming from the bottom." His enthusiasm and encouragement confirmed what David Imig and I had known was possible when we reported in *Change* (November/December 2008) on the beginnings of a then-new initiative aimed at distinguishing the EdD from the PhD.

After eight years of the initiative and four years of FIPSE funding, we have learned a good deal about change in schools of education. The FIPSE study affirmed that the CPED had transformed policies, practices, and program designs at the 21 schools of education that had participated in the project. Formal reports and "products" demonstrated the achievement of the CPED consortium as it has expanded in three phases.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN EDUCATION AT A TIPPING POINT

The EdD, created at Harvard College in 1921, was characterized by a murky purpose and unclear goals. Eighty years of scholarly inquiry into the differences between the EdD and the PhD have resulted in little more understanding of the distinction between the two degrees. Yet despite considerable attention and calls to eliminate one or both degrees for teacher education, little reform has resulted from this discourse.

In January 2007, the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) was launched as a response to Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, and Garabedian's 2006 call to schools of education to define each degree clearly or "risk becoming increasingly impotent in carrying out their primary missions—the advancement of knowledge and the preparation of quality practitioners" (p. 25).

Prior to this call, work at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching under its then-president Lee Shulman was focused on two areas: the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), whose aim was to understand research doctoral preparation across six disciplines, and the Preparation for the Professions Program (PPP), which investigated professional preparation in six fields (more information on which can be found at http://carnegiefoundation.org). Findings from both of these projects reaffirmed the need to distinguish the education doctorate (EdD) from the research doctorate (PhD) in education and to clarify the purpose of the EdD as a practitioner degree.

Around this same time, three other organizations were critically examining doctoral programs in education. The American Education Research Association (AERA) and the National Academy of Education (NAEd) together conducted "a systematic assessment of education research doctorate programs using the methodology of the National Research Council (NRC) Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs… to improve education research doctorate programs nationally." At the start of this project, the EdD was removed from the taxonomy because of confusion about its nature.

Meanwhile, in 2007 Levine published his third policy report that investigated US education schools. It called for the elimination of the EdD on the grounds that educational leaders could be best prepared with a "master's degree akin to the master's of business administration" (p. 92).

In the same year, the Council of Graduate Schools released its *Taskforce Report on the Professional Doctorate*, which described professional doctorates as the degree that was most appropriate for the "preparation for the potential transformation of that field of professional practice, just as the PhD represents preparation for the potential transformation of the basic knowledge in a discipline" (p. 6).

The timing was right for action, which prompted the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to issue a request for proposals to members of the Council of Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions (CADREI) to participate in a national dialogue aimed at improving the preparation of advanced educational practitioners. Schools of education deans brought the request back to their institutions and invited faculty members to submit proposals, with the intent that the work would be developed and led by faculty members who had an interest in and commitment to making these distinctions.

Twenty-five schools of education were initially selected, based on their potential for change in the redesign of their EdDs, as well as their commitment to support a faculty leader in an unusual process that called for sharing ideas nationally and testing them locally (Perry & Imig, 2008). Additional institutions were invited to join the effort in 2010 and again in 2014; the total current membership is now 86 schools of education in the US, Canada, and New Zealand.

SEEDS OF CHANGE

CPED is more than just an intellectual exercise. It transcends the debate that took place over most of the 20th century and has become the first action-oriented effort in the US aimed at producing definitions and frameworks for changing the meaning and design of the EdD.

The faculty members who have opted to participate as institutional representatives have led the ambitious CPED agenda at a grassroots level. Though the aims of the initiative were clear from the beginning, the goal of the consortium has been for shared learning to take place at the national level but for the design process to evolve at the local level.

At the national level, each member institution sends a representative faculty member or team to biannual convenings. At these meetings, participants engage in discussions and share ideas about program design and the purpose and look of practitioner preparation in education.

Early on, these conversations were shaped by the characteristics that Shulman and his Carnegie colleagues found relevant in other professions: signature pedagogies, laboratories of practice, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and capstone projects. These discussions are shaped by two basic questions: *What are the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that professionals working in education should demonstrably have?* and *How do we prepare them to have them?*

At the local level, members either identify a challenge or a weak spot in their existing programs or create a plan for new programs. Ideas generated at the national level are brought back to each institution and implemented. Then members bring back to the consortium what they have learned from testing the CPED innovations.

As a result of this collaboration, the consortium created three design frameworks representing a national consensus that could be implemented locally: a common definition of the education doctorate, the articulation of six working principles that guide practitioner-preparation program development, and the creation of common definitions of original and emerging CPED design concepts (see http://cpedinitiative. org).

Principles of the Education Doctorate

We, the members of CPED, believe that the professional doctorate in education prepares educators for the application of appropriate practices, for the generation of new knowledge, and for stewardship of the profession.

With this understanding, we will focus a research and development agenda to test, refine, and validate principles for the education doctorate. Those principles include the following:

The professional doctorate in education

- is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to solve complex problems of practice.
- prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to improve the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
- provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills so that they can work with diverse communities and build partnerships.
- provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and uses multiple frames to develop solutions.
- is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates practical and research knowledge and that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry.
- emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice.

Members are challenged to use these frameworks in a backward-mapping design process that starts with considering the outcomes of their redesigned or new programs. With this end in mind, members are asked to consider how components of their program design contribute to the outcomes established for their graduates. The backward-mapping process is central to the CPED design process, because only with a full understanding of the end can purposeful professional-practice preparation emerge.

Since 2007, the CPED consortium has more than tripled in size. In 2010 and 2014, additional cohorts of members were admitted; current membership stands at 86 schools and colleges of education, including two in Canada and one in New Zealand. Innovations developed in Phase I (2007–2009) are helping to shape the ways the new members redesign their EdD programs, as well as how they make distinctions between their EdD and PhD programs in the policies and practices that govern the two degrees.

In Phase II (2010–2014), the CPED consortium looked at how the 21 original members had changed their EdD programs as a result of participating in the consortium. The findings demonstrated that they had made changes on three levels: institutional, programmatic, and in individual faculty and student roles. While the final report (available at the CPED website) offers the full results of the study, some of the major changes we have seen at the institutional and programmatic levels are highlighted here.

Changing Education Schools

Across all cases in the study, we learned that schools of education were struggling with internal problems that centered on the quality, intent, and distinctiveness of their EdD programs. Coursework in these programs was disconnected from the needs of practitioners, low-quality dissertations were being generated to satisfy capstone requirements, and large numbers of ABD (all-but-dissertation) candidates floundered.

Externally, policymakers were pressuring the schools to improve the preparation of educational leaders, and districts and organizations were asking for better-trained individuals to lead schools and educational organizations. These demands left schools of education looking for ways to clarify and sharpen the focus of their degrees. CPED offered

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CPED Design Concept Definitions

Scholarly Practitioner: Scholarly practitioners blend practical wisdom with professional skills and knowledge to name, frame, and solve problems of practice. They use practical research and applied theories as tools for change because they understand the importance of equity and social justice. They disseminate their work in multiple ways, and they have an obligation to resolve problems of practice by collaborating with key stakeholders, including the university, the schools, the community, and individuals.

Signature Pedagogy: Signature pedagogy is the pervasive set of practices used to prepare scholarly practitioners for all aspects of their professional work: "to think, to perform, and to act with integrity" (Shulman, 2005, p. 52). Signature pedagogy includes three dimensions, as articulated by Shulman:

1. Teaching is deliberate, pervasive, and persistent. It challenges assumptions, engages in action, and requires ongoing assessment and accountability.
2. Teaching and learning are grounded in theory, research, and problems of practice. They lead to habits of mind, hand, and heart that can and will be applied to authentic professional settings.
3. Teaching helps students develop a critical and professional stance with a moral and ethical imperative for equity and social justice.

Inquiry as Practice: Inquiry as practice is the process of posing significant questions about complex problems of practice. Then, using research, theories, and professional wisdom, scholarly practitioners design innovative solutions to address those problems. At the center of inquiry as practice is the ability to use data to understand the effects of innovation, so it requires the ability to gather, organize, judge, aggregate, and analyze situations, literature, and data, viewed through a critical lens.

Laboratories of Practice: Laboratories of practice are settings where theory and practice inform and enrich each other. They present complex problems of practice where ideas—formed by the intersection of theory, inquiry, and practice—can be implemented, measured, and analyzed for the impact they make. Laboratories of practice facilitate transformative and generative learning that is manifested in the development of scholarly expertise and implementation of practice.

Dissertation in Practice (DiP): The dissertation in practice is a scholarly work that addresses a complex problem of practice.

Problem of Practice: A problem of practice is a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience, and outcomes.

a network to schools of education that were grappling with the issues, and it supplied a language and frameworks for redesigning their programs.

CPED institutions paid attention to rigor and program quality as a means to avoid the "PhD-lite" label, even as they focused on practitioner needs. As one dean explained, the EdD was becoming more "intellectual. …[It's] not just a matter of perseverance."

New EdD Designs

At the inception of the CPED initiative, Shulman suggested that CPED members develop a single model akin to medical or legal preparation. This idea didn't work, however. Faculty members who discussed the goals and purpose of the EdD quickly came to the conclusion that promulgating one "Carnegie model" of professional preparation would not allow individual programs to honor their local contexts (e.g., large, urban cities with large minority populations; middle-class, suburban areas; or rural, Midwestern regions with practitioners traveling hundreds of miles to study).

So, while the CPED-influenced programs that emerged were grounded in nationally generated ideas, they looked very different from each other in implementation. Nevertheless, cross-case analysis demonstrated that they all differentiated themselves from the PhD in many aspects of program design: admissions, course credits and delivery, faculty, student support, and the capstone design.

The newly designed programs have shifted towards serving practitioners. A clearly laid-out sequence of courses builds course upon course and leads to the capstone project. Most students interviewed noted that such a program design works well for them, given their limited resources and time, because it offers a map of where they are headed and the time they need to commit to the program.

Aligned with CPED's principles for program design, courses are constructed to honor professional knowledge and practice, transform thinking, promote issues of equity and social justice, and connect theory and methodology to practice. Courses and coursework are based on the needs of adult learners, encouraging them to be responsible for their own learning and providing an enlightening, practical, and authentic experience. In the words of one faculty member, the programs are "grounded in professional practice, but at the same time informed by outside perspectives."

Examples can be seen in field-embedded classes, case analyses, and action-research capstones. Students learn in laboratories of practice (often their work settings) by applying what they learn in their courses. In one faculty member's words, "Students take their learning back to their school sites, because it's not simply a theory-based program."

The engagement between instructors and students tends to look very different in CPED-influenced programs. Faculty members, who may include clinical faculty and practitioners in addition to tenure-track professors, are highly engaged with their students, often remaining with them to the capstone phase. They utilize students' professional skills and experience actively in course activities and assessments,

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ELEMENTS OF CPED PROGRAM DESIGN

Admissions. Common changes in admissions include eliminating the GRE, requesting professional references, and utilizing essays to gauge students' writing ability and content knowledge.

Time to degree. At a number of institutions, the time to degree has moved from six to ten years to three to four, including the capstone.

Number of credits. The credit requirements at many institutions have gone from the number in traditional PhD programs to 42–60 credits beyond the masters. All CPED-influenced programs require core/signature courses that are taken in a sequential order, along with electives.

Faculty. More clinical faculty have been hired and made central to the design and teaching of EdD programs, which offers graduates practical knowledge and connections to practice-based organizations.

Course delivery. Rather than teaching courses in traditional classrooms, faculty meet students in informal settings and in formats such as intensive summer sessions, weekend teaching, video conferencing, and on-line and hybrid arrangements. These courses take advantage of students' off time—evenings, weekends, summers—and fit into professional schedules. Additionally, at some institutions courses are offered at students' work sites or in their districts.

Advising. The traditional apprentice model has been replaced by a more egalitarian and communal one, in which faculty and students collaborate in learning. In most cases, group advising has become a more manageable way to work with a larger number of EdD candidates.

Dissertation format. The traditional five-chapter, lengthy traditional dissertation has been replaced by products characterized by varying designs, shorter lengths, different types of research, and new names—such as capstone or Dissertation in Practice [DiP]).

Dissertation oversight. Traditional committees composed of only tenure-track faculty have given way to ones that include practitioners. They have also been reduced in size, are allowing students to co-author research, and are advising students as groups rather than one to one.

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noting the importance of connecting theoretical learning to real practice.

EdD students have indicated that such inclusion makes them feel respected and understood. There is a sense that the faculty care for and are committed to student learning and success.

This suggests that the traditional mentor-mentee relationship commonly found in doctoral programs is no longer the norm for these redesigned programs. Rather, a partnership in which the faculty instructor brings one set of skills (research and theoretical knowledge) and the practitioner-student brings another (experience and practitioner knowledge) has taken its place. Together, student and faculty member work towards developing the students' scholarly-practitioner skills so that they will be able to solve problems in practice.

WHAT ABOUT RIGOR?

Historically, the perception of the EdD as a "PhD-lite" resulted from less rigorous methods courses and dissertations. Early in the CPED process, faculty discussed the purpose and design of the kinds of research-methods courses and dissertations that would be helpful for professionals.

Though redesigning these two components remains CPED's most difficult challenge, the data from the FIPSE study suggest that the consortium has made strides in solving this problem. Methods courses in CPED-influenced EdD programs are targeted at and useful to practitioners, teaching students to both use and do research. As one student interviewee noted, methods courses now "matter to us."

Articulating the benefit of methodological knowledge, faculty members noted, is a common theme in their programs. Students need to become problem-solvers and sound decision-makers by learning and applying the three tenants of research preparation—decipher, debate, and design—to the multitude of problems they face.

CPED members follow the notion of *inquiry in practice,* which is the process of posing significant questions about complex problems of practice and utilizing research, theories, and professional wisdom to design innovative solutions. At the center of this process is the ability to use data to understand and evaluate the effects of an action. This is taught in courses that provide understandable information in increments and often use a "just-in-time" approach to skill development, such as gap analysis or cycles of action research. Culminating products build upon these approaches, which in most CPED programs is the capstone.

Its name and purpose, however, has begun to change. The *Dissertation in Practice (DiP)* is a scholarly endeavor that identifies and addresses a complex and persistent problem of practice in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience, and outcomes (CPED, 2013).

> " **Methods courses in CPED-influenced EdD programs are targeted at and useful to practitioners, teaching students to both use and do research.**

The DiP investigation frequently begins in the first year, and steps towards the final product are embedded in coursework throughout the program. With its five or six chapters, typically the DiP still looks traditional, but its content—and in some cases its format—has changed. An example is the literature review. No longer an exhaustive review, it situates the student's problem of practice in a larger theoretical context and provides an understanding of what has been learned about the problem.

Another example is the final section of the DiP, which describes either how the problem has been solved or a plan of action to address it. In many instances, students report their plans or findings back to the constituents that have been participated in the work.

New approaches to DiPs and their defenses have also emerged. Group-authored DiPs or group collaborations on parts of them are widely accepted. Final products can take varying forms, including

- Group thematic dissertations,
- Technical reports or evaluations for a client,
- Three research articles unified by an introduction and conclusion,
- Policy papers that describe the implications of and alternatives for current policy initiatives.

Defenses frequently take place in practice settings and/or with stakeholders present, and DiP committees often include practitioners who are aware of the potential impact of the student's final product.

In short, CPED members claim that methodology and inquiry empower practitioners with tools for implementing changes in practice. Applying them rigorously in course work and the capstone experience provides the practitioner with the capacity to effect change within their individual educational contexts.

Over the past three years, CPED has presented an annual award to DiPs that show both rigor and impact. A committee made up of CPED faculty has developed a unique set of criteria that build on CPED principles to evaluate annual submissions. To date, five DiPs have been awarded, chosen from among 60+ submissions (see sample DiPs and annual winners at http://cpedinitiative.org).

Paving a New Path Forward

Changes in the EdD and the schools in which the degree is housed have resulted from collaboration across universities and departments. Examples of this kind of collaboration are too rare in higher education. This is particularly true of wide-scale changes to professional preparation, which is usual governed by oversight bodies. University faculty members typically do not work *for* higher education; rather they work *at* institutions of higher education, focusing on their research, grant writing and teaching and forging their identities from their professions.

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, however, has asked the faculty of member institutions to work *for* higher education, both locally and internationally—to develop cohesive, outcomes-oriented, professional programs that prepare those who want to practice in the field of PK-20 education. This collaboration has allowed ideas to percolate, innovations to be tried, and faculty to take ownership of the process.

When Lee Shulman and his Carnegie colleagues challenged schools of education to "reclaim" their education doctorates, they were sure that no institution could "pull it off in isolation." They argued instead for a network of faculty that would engage in collaborative experimentation. Eight years later, the data show that this strategy was the best way to pave the path forward.

Though originally designed to be a short-term collaboration, the CPED consortium continues to grow, having recently been established as an independent, 501c3 organization with over 80 members and a dozen seeking to be admitted.

The FIPSE-funded research has produced products in the form of manuals, guides, and other materials to support other schools in redesigning their EdD programs. Moving forward, the consortium has established learning communities to investigate more deeply how the core framework of CPED is being enacted and what impacts the graduates of CPED-influenced programs are having on practice.

Despite the many advances of the consortium institutions, the redesign of the EdD as the professional-practice degree in education is far from complete. CPED aims to forge ahead as the leader of this effort with an ambitious agenda for continued learning and sharing. ⊂

RESOURCES

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