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Understanding the 21st Century Practitioner-Scholar Identity and Its Development for Persistence

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Understanding the 21st Century Practitioner-Scholar-Steward Identity and Its Development for Persistence

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About Us

Our Education
- An EdD and PhD

Our Experience & Current Positions
- 5+ years of teaching in doctoral education
- Associate Professors, School of Education

Our Research
- Have authored and co-authored more than three dozen peer-reviewed journal articles and presented and co-presented over 50 professional presentations nationally and internationally, focusing on distance education, special education, and doctoral persistence.
- Our primary research focus has been doctoral persistence with a focus on online education, females, and poverty.
- Our current focus is female identity development through the doctoral journey and early career that gives rise to persistence.

Our Book
- *Navigating the Doctoral Journey: A Handbook of Strategies for Success*
Overview

1. The Problem
2. Conceptual Framework
3. The Practitioner-Scholar-Steward Model
4. Implications
The Problem
The Models

First generation doctoral

Second generation doctoral
The Models

The Problem

**First Generation:** The writings of educational researchers, “in their countless academic journals … are not to be found in a school staff room” (p. 3).

**Second Generation:** Practitioner research is not often shared or set forth in propositional form. Scholarship is not embraced; thus, the work is never made public in a peer reviewed venue that others may draw from or build on.
The Statistics

Educational doctorates:
- Long time-to-degree completion rates (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008; National Science Foundation, 2009)
- Higher rate of stop-out than any other doctoral degree (Nettles & Millet, 2006),
- Students will choose to leave even years into their program (e.g., 9 – 10 years in) (Gravois, 2007)
- Lowest across disciplines in doctoral student publications (15% compared to 30%) and presentations (30% compared to 37%) (Nettles & Millet, 2006)

Distance programs:
- Attrition rates of 50% to 70% (Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Nettles & Millet, 2006)
- Online learners are “usually older, nontraditional students who may experience anxiety particularly with online course delivery systems” (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012, p. 95).
A Conceptual Framework
There is a close connection between agency and identity (Nasir & Saxe, 2003).

The manner in which doctoral students manage and negotiate the internal identity tensions and external forces are ultimately influential in their choice to persist (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Spaulding, & Lunde, in process).
Identity is complex and dynamic.
Female Doctoral Student Multiple Identity Model

A. Female Identity
   Daughter, sister, wife, mother

B. Professional Identity
   Educator  Practitioner-Scholar

C. Academic Identity
   Student  Scholar

Practitioner-Scholar-Advocate Identity

**Differentiation

An intentional continuation or discontinuation of modeled family roles

*The Core Sense of Self

SES

Spirituality/Faith/Religion

Relationships/Social factors

Internal/external tensions & management of identity interactions

Education/Career

Social-cultural stereotypes

Gender

Marital status

Familial factors (current & past)

Race/ethnicity

Maternal Invisible

Academic

Invisibility

Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. J., & Spaulding, L. S. (2015, February 9). A Grounded Theory Study Explaining how Female Doctoral Candidates Negotiate Their Identities as Mothers and Scholars and Persist Unto Degree Completion. 27th Annual Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference. Las Vegas, NV.
Conceptual Framework

Drawing from the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000)

- Every individual has a core sense of self
- Multiple identity dimensions are continually intersecting and influencing one another.
- Surrounding the core and identity dimensions is the context in which a person experiences her life, such as family, sociocultural conditions, current experiences, and early socialization (Gee et al., 1996; Jones & McEwen, 2000).
- The salience of each identity dimension to the core is fluid and depends on contextual influences and experiences.
Professional and academic identities are both individual and social, influenced by the core sense of self, expertise, communities, and institutions (Kogan 2000; Ibarra et al. 2005; Sweitzer, 2009).
The lack of negotiation of tensions and failure to successfully intersect the dimensions of identity being developed during the doctoral program with the core and with other identity dimensions results in breakdown (Nasir & Saxe, 2003).
The Practitioner-Scholar-Steward Model
The professional doctorate in education prepares educators for:

- the *application* of appropriate and specific practices,
- the *generation* of new knowledge,
- and for the *stewardship* of the profession.

Council of Graduate Schools’ (2005); Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (2009)
Unlike the traditional academic discourse in universities, **collaboration** rather than game like competitiveness and power relationships is the norm (Gross, 2001). Theory is not valued over practice, nor is practice seen to be determined by theory. Knowledge creation is motivated by "rightness… rather than reward" (Gross, 2001, p.227) -- by passion, conviction, and compassion.
As members of the academic community, scholars are marked by the following characteristics,

The first characteristic of the academic context which an outsider will notice is its specialized language. A second is the high value placed on theories rooted in traditional disciplines or established fields of academic study. A third is the obligation to place one’s ideas in close relationship to those of other writers by profuse citation. A fourth is the authority structure whereby the epistemological authority upheld by institutional norms and practices is reinforced by the positional authority of assessment.

- Eraut, 1994, p. 30

- Develop in-depth knowledge about their discipline and competence in discipline specific methods of scholarly inquiry.
- Construct cognitive maps of major theories, key theorists, and landmark studies.
- Autonomous learners into self-directed learners and scholars, their copious quoting of others work is left behind for engaging with intellectuals in the field with their own voice; contributions to the knowledge of the discipline are made via creation and interpretation.
- Conceptualize, design, and implement research in order to generate new understanding.
However, faculty do not solely emphasize students’ intellectual development.

They recognize the limits of the academic context and how the philosophical and social conditioning of research can limit its value (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Habermas, 1972), especially when results of research fail to be expressed in language that is understandable to those who can use it.

Students are not only encouraged to be researchers but stewards of knowledge, concerned with the rigorous knowledge creation with its relevance with constant reflection on how it can be made user friendly in order to make a difference in the real world.

Faculty mentor students to become both practitioners and scholars.
Developing as competent, reflective practitioners with in-depth discipline knowledge and specializations.

Think about not only application of knowledge, but also its generation to improve competent practice.

The goal: “. . . to facilitate theoretically grounded research that generates actionable findings” (Nelson, London, & Strobel, 2015, p. 17).
As scholar-practitioners, students develop “an appreciation of the norms, appropriate behaviour and values embodied in both” (Sorensen, 2004, p.160) and engage in all four levels of what Boyer (1990, 1997) termed, “new scholarship.”

"Scholarship of discovery" refers to traditional scholarship, or the research into one's discipline and discovery of original ideas and presentation of papers on these ideas at conferences or publication in journals.

"Scholarship of synthesis or integration" is a scholarship that synthesizes and interprets the original ideas of the scholarship of discovery, and adds new insights, often making scholarship more public and useful as a result.

"Scholarship of engagement or application" is service to the outside world -- applying the knowledge of the disciplines to the real world, as well as allowing the world of social needs to define areas of

"Scholarship of teaching and learning" is planning and continuous examination of pedagogical procedures.
As Benard of Clairvaux (as cited in Lichtmann, 2005, p.10) suggested,

For there are some who desire to know only for the sake of knowing; and this is disgraceful curiosity. And there are some who desire to know, that they may become known themselves; and this is disgraceful vanity….And there are also some who desire to know in order to sell their knowledge, as for money, or for degrees; and this is disgraceful commercialism. But there are also some who desire to know in order to edify; and this is love.
Implications for Doctoral Education
Implications for Admissions

- Require evidence (e.g., GRE scores) for entrance to ensure strong quantitative and qualitative reasoning as well as writing skills.
- Test for a basic understanding of educational theory and established practice so that course work can focus more in-depth on practitioner training and on areas of specializations.
- Non-cognitive measures may be examined as measures that predict success.
Implications for Programs

Create integration between science and practice resources and locations by developing research training facilities on campus (e.g., research K-12 schools, tutoring centers), with resources to sustain such facilities.

Create tenure/promotion system that enables core faculty to integrate research, teaching, and practice in a way that allows students to observe and interact with faculty functioning across areas.
Formal and informal instruction aimed at developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for research and analysis activities for the purpose of science and practice. This should include:

- **Formal course work**
  - Quantitative, qualitative, action, and program evaluation research methods and analysis as well as critical thinking for critical review of literature.
  - Critical reviews and presentations of best practices and empirically validated instructional strategies should be conducted and results used to inform practice or develop further strategies that can be examined and results shared.

- **Individual and collaborative research via participation in faculty guided research teams or research communities.**

Research and practice training and engagement in scholarly activities should be integrated and expected for duration of entire doctoral program and ranging from faculty to student initiated based on student’s stage in the program.

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**Figure. Research, Analysis, and Scholarship Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes**
References


Gravois, J. (2007). In humanities, 10 years may not be enough to get a Ph.D. — but overall rates for finishing doctorates may be better than though, new data show. *Chronicle of Higher Education, 53*(47), A1.


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- Our Presentation
  - Available at: http://tinyurl.com/21centurymodel

- Navigating the Doctoral Journey: A Handbook of Strategies for Success
  - Available at: http://amzn.to/1lTrrFv