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From First to Second Generation Professional Doctorate

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Introduction

Recent research in Australia and overseas has shown that while Professional Doctorates are not new, the number of Professional Doctorates has burgeoned in Australia in recent years (Maxwell & Shanahan 1996, 1997, 2000; Trigwell, Shannon & Maurizi 1997), in New Zealand (Maxwell & Shanahan 2000) and in England (Bourner, Bowden & Laing 2001). The professional in-service doctorate (as compared to the professional pre-service doctoral award) has been common in the United States for many years and has become established there (CSPEC 1987, p.8). However as far as the award of a PhD or an EdD is concerned, at some universities the distinction is one of choice. Edwardson (2000) reports that in the nursing profession in the US there has been an ongoing struggle over nature of the professional doctoral award. Recent developments in the nature of Professional Doctorates in Australia have been interesting, so much so that Seddon (2000) showed that it was possible to recognise the emergence of a new phase of professional doctoral awards there.

But first what characterised first generation Professional Doctorates (in Australia at least)? Earlier work was able to show that Professional Doctorates broadly had a sameness about them. Mostly earlier Professional Doctorates follow the course work plus thesis model (Maxwell & Shanahan 1997, p.138-40) and appear to be dominated by academe. Broadly, Trigwell *et al* (1997, p.6) agreed. In short, structural differences from the PhD characterised the “different but equal” Professional Doctorates.

What then of the second generation? The features Seddon (2000) identified features in the UWS (University of Western Sydney) EdD which made this program different from Professional Doctorates include (1) training in research and applied studies, (2) the portfolio, (3) a program comprising seminars, meetings and conferences, and (4) assessment which required a global judgement be made about the scope and quality of the award. Seddon summarises what will inform the development of the Monash EdD:

[The] trajectory, from a substantially taught professional doctorate depending heavily on coursework and individualised supervision, towards a learning environment that provides diverse support to facilitate learning by doctoral students (and staff), is what I understand to be the move from first to second generation Professional Doctorates (Seddon 2000, p. 3).

The UWS EdD approach is encapsulated by the following:

The EdD is based on a partnership between the University and the educational employers to provide candidates with an integrated set of experiences enabling them to demonstrate, through research scholarship, a set of outcomes reflecting the qualities prized in modern professional educators (Baumgart & Linfoot 1998, p.117).

What follows is an exploration of the Lee et al model which created considerable interest at the 2000 Professional Doctorates conference. It is this model which brings together second generational features identified in the three cases and which is subsequently used to inform the most recent developments in the EdD at UNE. The final focus of the paper, then, is on the projected changes to the UNE EdD.

Theoretical considerations

There have recently been important and related theoretical developments in relating to the conceptualisation of EdDs. Centrally, the work of Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow (1994) show the effects of the new “knowledge society” on universities and employers, and the displacement of knowledge production from the disciplinary university to the places where people work, that is, knowledge produced in the “context of application”. To some extent higher education is under threat in this view. One reading would be that Professional Doctorates are one form of resolution of this contestation, especially in that it retains universities’ certification function and market. Scott (1995) acknowledges the importance of the marketplace for universities and also builds upon Gibbons et al.

It is on these two works that Alison Lee, Bill Green and Marie Brennan in *Research and Knowledge at Work: Perspectives, case studies and innovative strategies* (Garrick and Rhodes 2000) present their “hybrid curriculum” for the Professional Doctorate (See Figure 1), a conceptualisation first presented at the 1998 Professional Doctorates conference. The work of Lee et al epitomises the shift to second generation Professional Doctorates. The site for Professional Doctoral activity is the intersection of the Profession, Workplace and University spheres (the P/W/U site). The key notion is the distinctions made between Mode 1 knowledge production (of the disciplinary university) and Mode 2 (the challenging knowledge production of the “context of application”). In the Lee et al summary, Mode 2 knowledge is produced in (the) context of application; transdisciplinary; heterogeneous; heterarchical and transient; socially accountable and reflexive, including a wider and more temporary and heterogeneous set of practitioners, collaborating on problems defined in specific and localised context (Lee et al, 2000, p. 124).

They contrast such socially distributed sites with the more culturally concentrated, Mode 1 knowledge in which

problems (are) set and solved in context governed by academic interests of specific communities (characterised as) disciplinary; homogeneous; hierarchical and form preserving; accountable to discipline-based notions of methodologically ‘sound’ research practice (Lee et al, 2000, p. 124).

Mode 1 knowledge is more consistent with first generation Professional Doctorates. Lee et al’s “hybrid curriculum” for the Professional Doctorate is “a three-way model, where the university, the candidate’s profession and the particular work-site of the research meet in specific and local ways, in the context of a specific organisation” (Lee et al, 2000, p.127). The conceptualisation has great potential for program development and for the production of useful knowledge (Seddon 1999) in which

action is part of the research. We would also argue that the professional site/sphere includes the notions of improvement, collegiality and ethical behaviour. More especially, the hybrid curriculum does not privilege academic over knowledge produced and held by the profession. The model is useful too in that it points to the centrality of the workplace, ie, the realities of the people and human relationships there, the time available, the actual funding and resource base.

Maxwell and Shanahan (2000) used the Lee et al conceptualisation as the basis for analyses of 72 (of 109) Professional Doctoral programs in Australia and New Zealand. In relation to the movement from first to second generation Professional Doctorates, they concluded

There is evidence that second generation Professional Doctorates are gaining a footing in higher education [in Australia]. Approximately half of the Professional Doctoral programs (N=37) indicated, in one way or another ... that their interests were at the heart of the Lee [et al] (2000) model. We note especially that twenty or so of these gave a P/W/U site response on the distinctiveness of their program. At the same time there is also evidence that there are programs, perhaps around twenty or so, remaining within the first generation of development (for example, 24 programs at the U site on distinctiveness) (Maxwell & Shanahan 2000, p. 17).

In considering the three cases presented in the original paper, the shift in source of knowledge, the focus of the products away from the academic genre and audience is evident in them. There is a great interest in the workplace and potential for the production of useful knowledge, heightened by the input of the workplace supervisor in some programs. They appear to be building upon the experience of the candidate to improve the work of the profession.

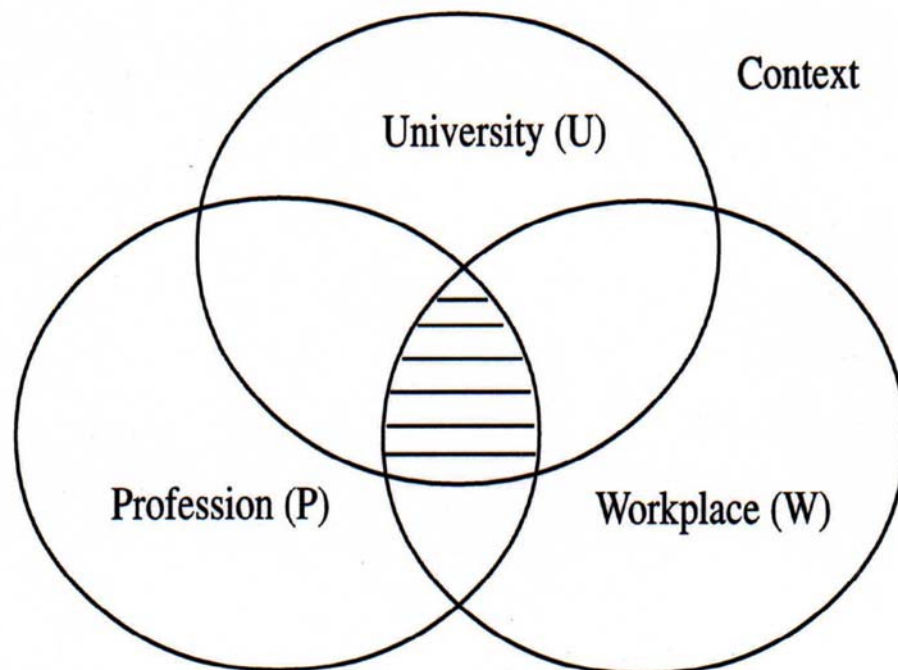


Figure 1. The hybrid curriculum of the professional doctorate (after Lee et al. 2000, p. 127)

UNE's EdD

The UNE EdD was not one of those that had interests “at the heart of the Lee et al (2000) model”. The UNE EdD had a traditional structure, developed in the period 1990 –1993, brought into being within a conservative academic environment. It had a number of distinctive features (Maxwell & Carrigg 1996) including compulsory residential schools and the professional extension unit. Overtime these two features in particular waned as enrolment numbers declined. The program presently contains 75% research represented by the single dissertation of about 70,000 words and 25% course work which consists of three units, one of which is the compulsory Advanced Research Methods. Clearly the perspective of latter unit can have an important impact upon the dissertation. Students in the EdD at UNE have consistently expressed satisfaction with this particular unit (Maxwell & Carrigg 1996, p.200). Supervisors are typically from UNE faculty. About 50 mature professionals have enrolled since the inception of the EdD in 1994 and there have been just six graduates (to 2000). This was a first generation Professional Doctorate suffering from fierce market place competition (cf Maxwell & Shanahan 2000).

Comment by the examiners of the first three UNE EdD dissertations catalysed the present authors to mount a small research project (Maxwell & Vine 1998). The comments of one of the nine examiners best illustrated my concern:

This particular study has all the hallmarks of quality academic work (leading to) high standard scholarship. It would be most unfortunate if the Education Doctorate degree were not accorded the same standing as a traditional doctorate, and *I must admit to not really being able to distinguish between them in this particular case* [my emphasis].

From my point of view we were dammed with faint praise. If the UNE EdD is not distinctively professional why have a different doctoral award from the PhD in education at UNE?

In consideration of this concern, discussions with stakeholders at UNE covered a range of ideas. Eventually two key notions appeared to be productive ways forward. The first was the importance of experience as a criterion of entry for the EdD. This is one distinguishing feature of the EdD (as compared to the PhD) at UNE. Secondly we were concerned that the nature of the framework within which the Advanced Research Methods unit presented research techniques may be covertly contributing to prescription of the nature of the research in the program.

Our analysis indicated a formidable agenda for change for the UNE EdD. For example, if taken up as a distinctive feature of UNE's EdD, critical reflection would pose interesting challenges in unit development. Of course experience is an essential precursor to critical reflection. An understandable response might be to seek to incorporate such material in the Advanced Research Methods unit. However, that unit is already very demanding in terms of breadth and depth of coverage and complexity of ideas, and if it were to be modified to give greater emphasis to action research it would be impractical to add critical reflection as yet another discrete but integrated theme. This suggests that a new unit devoted entirely to the understanding and practice of critical reflection might be needed, and this carries other implications for program design.

The discussants (10 of 15 EdD supervisors at UNE) clearly thought the workplace central to EdD work because it is the source of the research question and the site of professional experience. There was also a desire for research methodologies that allowed the workplace to be central. Action research was seen as one clearly distinctive and appropriate research methodology for Professional Doctorates and the UNE EdD in particular. The great strength of action research is that it allows for the actioning of knowledge in the workplace, producing knowledge that is useful (Seddon 1999).

Professor Bill Green, who conceived the hybrid curriculum model, joined the faculty of UNE in 1998. He introduced it to EdD stakeholders. Building upon earlier developmental work over a series of meetings and a retreat, those involved in the program in 2000 agreed to use the hybrid model as the key organising conceptualisation for a new EdD. A discussion paper was created in August 2000 (Maxwell, Green & McCrea 2000, p. 3) in which the salient points were:

1. The relationship between the University, the Workplace and the Profession (is) central to any redevelopment of the EdD.
2. Course work be specifically tailored....to consist of three major units of study, addressed respectively to 'Professional Practice', 'Organisational Dynamics' and '[Advanced] Research [Methods/] Literacies'.

We see the units presented here as topics to encapsulate a shift from Mode I to Mode 2 knowledge, especially in that they are not disciplinary, and recognise that we academics have to find new ways of getting students access to professional knowledge, including the use of online and face-to-face discussions since almost all of our students are not on campus. Following the discussion paper, decisions were made (not yet sanctioned by the Academic Board, though no great difficulty is anticipated because the University has become more open to market driven alternatives) that a portfolio would be the preferred product over a dissertation. The portfolio will include a linking paper and could include pieces that were written for different audiences, notably workplace and professional audiences as well as academic ones. Furthermore, the portfolio allows for the possibility of a number of short workplace-relevant pieces of research. Busy senior professionals, who it is our experience undertake the EdD, are involved in a wide range of projects as part of their professional work and so the new EdD can complement that range of work via the projects included in the portfolio. It is also our experience that many busy professionals do not want to be tied down to the single piece of sustained research to be written up in the academic genre over a number of years.

More recent discussions have changed and further specified the program. The unit on Organisational Dynamics was re-focussed to one that centred upon the nature of the workplace to add to the one on Professional Practice. Details of the nature of the units have still to be worked out by the respective teams and it is likely that the discussions around the Methods/Literacies unit will be lively. A fourth unit has been conceived which commences as candidature begins. This is the Research Proposal unit at the end of which will be a formal presentation. These mostly will be given at the Program School, held annually. Entry requirements will remain at research at honours level plus at least four years experience in the profession together with access to workplaces. Parallel with these developments has been the re-connection of the stakeholders in the program with teachers and administrators who will work with us in an ongoing fashion. We see this connection as crucial and want to enshrine this formally as well as informally. Naturally, there are still issues to be worked through. These include:

- Supervision of the new EdD: Who has the skills and of those that do, how can their workloads remain reasonable? How can we encourage professionals outside the university to co-supervise?;
- Relationships clarified between Course-work and Research: How can we develop course work which is organic to the research?;
- Funding of administration/governance of Professional Doctorates; and
- Examination: Should this be oral and/or written? Who can best examine and what is the right mix of academics and professionals in the field?
- Portfolios: How can we maintain rigour in the research projects?

Conclusions

Professional Doctoral programs have burgeoned in Australia and elsewhere. In Australia at least the first generation forms were characterised as only structurally different from the PhD, in fact sometimes described as a “PhD plus course work”. More fundamentally though, these early forms privileged academic over professional knowledge and outputs (cf Maxwell & Shanahan 1997). There is evidence that there are some programs in Australia that have the features of what has been termed second generation Professional Doctorates. In these the realities of the workplace, the knowledge and the improvement of the profession and the rigour of the university are being brought together in new relationships.

The UNE EdD was one of the early Professional Doctorates. Despite the concerns that were raised initially in the middle 1990s change was glacial, though understandable. Recent planned developments are based upon the Lee et al hybrid curriculum model which places Mode 2 knowledge production at the centre of the learning. While there are still quite a few details to be worked out before the first students enroll in 2002, there is a general level of enthusiasm and satisfaction that the underlying conceptualisation is a strong one and so we have a sound basis upon which we can build our second generation EdD.

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