

## International Perspectives on Designing Professional Practice Doctorates Book Review

Jacqueline Hawkins, EdD  
University of Houston  
[jhawkins@uh.edu](mailto:jhawkins@uh.edu)

**Storey, V. A. (Ed.). (2016). *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. 288 pages. Hardback \$79.99, e-book \$30.45. ISBN 978-1-137-52706-6**

### A REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON DESIGNING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE DOCTORATES

*International Perspectives on Designing Professional Practice Doctorates: Applying the Critical Friends Approach to the EdD and Beyond* by Storey (2016) is important to stakeholders who want to learn about doctoral education and how faculty, institutions, and government policies around the world have responded to changes in the EdD across various disciplines. The design of professional practice doctorates is complex and complicated work. Storey puts that work on a global stage and engages with her co-authors as critical friends who describe, analyze, and dissect their doctorates of practice in their respective disciplines. This is done with an eye to understanding and improving professional practice doctorates and addressing the positive societal and economic impacts they can generate. This unique book would be useful for faculty and administrators at doctorate-granting institutions, particularly Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) member institutions, who are designing new EdD programs; reclaiming, reframing, and redesigning current EdD Programs; and trying to figure out what is working and how. Storey and her colleagues present a plethora of well-documented information and sources that nurture the reader with a space to think and a sense of belonging to a grander enterprise. We become an integral part of a global community of scholars who can help to transform doctoral education and document that transformation. Bottom line—Storey has edited a distinctive book that gives us hope that we can design and redesign doctorates of practice.

Storey (2016) has the lived-experiences of designing and directing professional leadership EdDs for both private and public universities in the United States and leading in schools in the United Kingdom. She has both extensive scholarship in the design, implementation, and adjustment of doctorates of practice and has organized and attended international conferences related to doctoral education. These activities have connected Storey to professionals in Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Israel, and the United States who join her as critical friends in the overall work of designing doctorates and as co-authors in this book.

Chapters provide readers with a wealth of information about the proliferation of programs, the differentiation of the doctorate across disciplines, the variety of both content and format of the EdD, an understanding of the numbers of graduates and program trends, and the policies and politics that underpin many programs. These dominant themes have been linked to research, policy, and practice; can expand our understanding of the current global market and what our colleagues have done; can provide us with potential program differentiators and blueprints with which we can evaluate our own institutional progress; and can help us to customize programs to meet the needs of our respective community of stakeholders. Authors have provided extensive sources for their work and have included supporting documentation from theory, research, policy, and practice.

While it is clear that transformation within their programs continues to be a work in progress, Storey and her colleagues have provided the reader with a wide-range of dominant themes of contemporary interest that are highlighted in this review. For example, themes respond to some of our prevalent questions and include: how can we facilitate program change?; what have others done to adjust content and format to relate to a profession?; and, how many students are enrolled, in which subjects, and how successful are the programs? Most themes cut across various chapters and will be highlighted next.

### Program Change

From the outset, Storey (2016) expands our horizon and contextualizes the history, magnitude, and global scale of professional doctorates. Initially, we learn that professional practice doctorates have a relatively brief history of 50+ years. The evolution of doctoral programs in Europe, Australasia, and the United States demonstrates that programs are, in general, more similar than different. Many programs struggle through an identity crisis where the value of knowledge creation versus knowledge incorporation endures as an essential tension; most programs grapple with relevance to practice; and, all programs have a goal of improving practice—we learn that we are not alone in our challenges and that many before us have something to contribute to our solutions.



New articles in this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.



This journal is published by the University Library System of the University of Pittsburgh as part of its D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program and is cosponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Press.



[impactinged.pitt.edu](http://impactinged.pitt.edu)  
Vol. 3 (2018)

This journal is supported by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate: A Knowledge Forum on the EdD (CPED) [cpedinitiative.org](http://cpedinitiative.org)

ISSN 2472-5889 (online)  
DOI 10.5195/ie.2018.40

A differentiating strength of the book is the use of critical friendship theory (CFT) as a tool to help us to change programs—CFT is front and center throughout. Storey and Reardon (2016) set the tone of the book in chapter one by linking doctoral programs with the needs of society and economic outcomes. Essentially, societal needs (and by extension global economies) should drive the content of programs and should become the critical friends of the academy—the survival of doctoral programs may be determined by their value in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. From this vantage point, they differentiate the more classic knowledge creation (i.e., where doctoral candidates may be far removed from practice; e.g., a PhD candidate) from knowledge incorporation (i.e., where the doctoral candidate is steeped in practice; e.g., an EdD candidate). They teach us that our doctoral programs must evolve in ways that increase their relevance, rigor, and connections to our respective stakeholders and must help to build capacity and expand economies.

An overarching theme of the book is the role of being a member of a “critical friend group” (CFG). Specifically, how we can use the CFT process to learn to trust each other and work together as faculty to transform doctoral education. While this volume relies heavily on CFT to drive program change, it is not a guide to the acquisition and use of CFT. To achieve this level of facility, faculty members and institutions likely will need to supplement their change process with CFT training, templates, and professional development.

Some of the most specific program change information is provided by researchers in Australia and New Zealand. Mpofu (2016) details the history of policy reforms and government reports, their connection to economic priorities and workforce needs, and how they have driven an increase in professional doctorates in medicine and psychology. He differentiates the PhD as engaging in original and independent research from the EdD where candidates either conduct research that contributes to practice or engage in applied independent research. His work provides a fine-grain analysis of Australia’s programs to include: admission criteria, professional recognition, requirements (research, coursework, clinical experiences), and length (three to five years). Malloch (2016) complements Mpofu by describing three evolutionary generations of doctoral work in Australia that have resulted in the current model of a doctorate that links the university with both professional practice and change while situating each doctoral student at the center of self-directing their learning. Maxwell’s (2016) trends in doctoral education over three decades should caution us to focus our own efforts. After an initial increase in the number of EdDs earned in Australia in the 1990s, programs have seen decreasing numbers in the past decade. These results are attributed to funding changes, greater flexibility within recent PhD programs, and declines in the influence of EdDs.

In general, the detail with which program change information is provided is a strength of this work and the authors specify methods that can be replicated across the globe. These blueprints for change provide us some of the process measures we need to evaluate our own programs. However, most programs have not as yet dealt in sufficient manner with the impact of program graduates on the various professions.

### Program Format and Link to Profession

Throughout the book, many elements are linked to informal and formal evaluation studies that help us to understand how well various program formatting features have worked. International attributions

of why programs have evolved to their current status are often informed by politics, policy, and context. Authors describe why external turbulence has precipitated internal changes to doctorates of practice. Frequently these are related to industry demands, retaining relevance, and adjusting to future needs. Content, delivery formats, design elements, experiences, and dissertations in practice provide the reader with a rich panoply of options for consideration in the design/redesign process. Rich case studies and extensive descriptive analyses detail both the thought processes and the decision-steps that were involved in determining the extent to which professional practice doctorates meet the demand for professional leaders who have the skills and dispositions to change outcomes.

Smythe, Rolfe, and Larmer (2016) provide a bold conceptualization (and actualization in health fields) of the program revisions necessary to support practitioners to become change-agents, in their respective professions, with EdDs. In taking an applied process approach to problem solving they empower practitioners with the tools to solve the variety of challenges that face them daily. Doctoral programs become safe havens for thinking, learning, and embarking on ways to improve practice; faculty members focus on their (and their university’s) contribution to a community; and, ultimately, the benefits from research/scholarship to various education fields that can follow.

The redesign efforts of Hawkes and Taylor (2016) further illustrate the importance of practice. They begin by embracing the extensive professional knowledge of their EdD candidates and describe how candidates in the United Kingdom needed a structure that developed their research skills and advanced their careers. Their program options are tailored to the professional work-life of their students. Specifically, weekend-university, week-long blocks, greater infusion of technology tools, and a reconceptualization of degree phases have resulted from discussions and feedback from students, faculty, and staff.

While it may feel that these changes involve turning the traditional academy on its head, their valuable work engages the current professional capacity of their students, enhances the skills of caring professionals whose research products change lives, and can support both a university’s relevance within a community and the practical viability of its research contributions. The challenge to those of us in the profession will likely involve our own ability to recognize that we are not experts in all fields and that we have much to learn from those whose professional skills can complement our own research skills. Role release and professional development opportunities for faculty constitute some of what likely must happen for institutions to compete successfully in a global market of professional doctorates.

### Program Enrollments, Disciplines, and Successes

The number of programs and the number of students enrolled in those programs have tended to rise in the past two decades. More than half of the doctoral degree awarding institutions in Australia now offer the EdD, the number of programs in the United Kingdom has increased from 109 in 1998 to 308 in 2009, while CPED institutions in the United States have grown from 25 to 80+ institutions in a decade (Maxwell, 2016). Student enrollments in the programs are more challenging to determine. Some report enrollments of eight while others compile the total enrollment in an entire country’s programs (e.g., 2,228 students enrolled in doctoral programs in the United Kingdom in 2009). Disciplines represented range widely from



healthcare (psychology, nursing, and medicine), education (educational psychology, educational leadership, and teaching and learning), art and design or technology, to business and work-based learning. Successes in the various programs tend to be broadly defined. Some report graduate numbers and general time to degree. Some describe the links of programs to professions, but concrete examples are rarely presented.

The information provided is a good starting point for a more systematic compilation of programs, admissions, enrollments, and graduation rates. A census of programs would be helpful to combat the inherent challenges in the various sampling criteria that are evident here. The breadth of disciplines attests to the demand for EdD programs by professionals. However, a caveat is the lack of professional standards, likely challenges with the number of supervisors with professional experience, variety in supervision models, and the on-going relevance of programs to communities and economies. The need for continual revision and redesign in changing times is evident.

Overall, the main ideas and major objectives of the book are accomplished well. Storey (2016) and her colleagues continue a valuable global conversation about professional practice doctorates and make a meaningful contribution to improved preparation of education doctorates. A strength of the book is the many authors who have been willing to describe their programs, share their evaluation outcomes, and discuss their challenges—they have indeed become our critical friends. On the whole, it is too early to determine whether or not these recommendations contribute solutions to the puzzle that is doctoral education, however, early indicators from research studies, policy briefs, and evaluation studies support Storey and her colleagues' contention that this is a viable path to pursue.

An overall weakness of the book is the lack of research on the impact of the graduates of professional practice doctorates. Specifically, do the students who graduate from new or redesigned programs align with society's needs and generate economic impact? What is their ability to transform research into action that meets the needs of prospective employers (and society) and demonstrate improvements in practice? It would behoove us to set forth that evaluation plan now to ensure that the changes we make to the EdD produce professionals who can provide new perspectives that help society adapt well to the ever-increasing pace of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In closing, this book should prompt us each to ask: why should my program change?; what are the drivers for change in my respective contexts and communities?; what elements are essential to my success?; what needs to occur to ensure that success?; and, how do I document and demonstrate the success of my program? On a national level we can engage in similar conversations: how do we tell the story of our program reclamation and innovation over the past 10 years?; and, how do we use that information to engage with others in an improvement science process that continues to transform the preparation of professional practice doctorates? Both lessons learned and the rich experiences from international institutions, that have implemented and evaluated their respective programs for decades, can inform institutions that are designing, developing, implementing, or re-designing a program. We too can add to the discourse; we too can add to critical friendship theory and practice.

## REFERENCES

- Hawkes, D., & Taylor, S., (2016). Redesigning the EdD at UCL Institute of Education: Thoughts of the incoming EdD program leaders. In V.A. Storey (Ed.), *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond* (pp. 115-125). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Malloch, M., (2016). Trends in doctoral education in Australia. In V.A. Storey (Ed.), *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond* (pp. 63-78). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Maxwell, T.W., (2016). Australian EdDs: At a crossroad? In V.A. Storey (Ed.), *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond* (pp. 79-98). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Mpofu, C., (2016). Professional doctorates in psychology and medicine in New Zealand and Australia: Context of development and characteristics. In V.A. Storey (Ed.), *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond* (pp. 63-78). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Smythe, E., Rolfe, G., & Larmer, P., (2016). Learning to think in the corporate university: Developing a doctorate of practice. In V.A. Storey (Ed.), *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond* (pp. 99-113). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Storey, V.A. & Reardon, R.M., (2016). Critical friends and the evolving terminal degree. In V.A. Storey (Ed.), *International perspectives on designing professional practice doctorates: Applying the critical friends approach to the EdD and beyond* (pp. 9-21). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.