Reclaiming the Education Doctorate:
A Guidebook for Preparing Scholarly Practitioners
Book Review

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The professional practice doctorate in education (EdD) aims to develop students as scholarly practitioners or individuals who use theory and research to address pressing educational issues. Faculty members working with EdD students are tasked with designing their programs in ways that integrate academic knowledge with the professional expertise of students.

EdD programs have evolved significantly since their inception in 1920. Originally designed to equip educational administrators with the credentials essential for career advancement, the initial EdD programs faced criticism due to their unclear focus and structure. This ambiguity has fueled academic debate and confusion surrounding the EdD for nearly a century. In the early 2000s, Levine (2005) offered a critique, asserting that the majority of EdD programs in the US did not provide educational leaders with the necessary skills for conducting and applying research for improvement of practice. In addressing the criticism, Shulman et al. (2006) proposed a series of steps to redefine the EdD as a professional practice doctorate serving the needs of educational leaders who need to use evidence in practice. These steps include enhancing graduates' research capacities with a focus on local issues, strengthening the connection between research and practice, and promoting collaboration, equity, and ethics.

For those involved in EdD programs, including faculty, students, and program developers, the ongoing debate on the philosophy and purpose of the EdD is well known. However, despite recent sources that shed light on the degree's evolution, there has been a notable absence of a comprehensive guide to assist faculty members in their EdD program (re)design efforts. Perry's book, *Reclaiming the Education Doctorate: A Guidebook for Preparing Scholarly Practitioners*, emerges as the first complete, step-by-step guide for designing and improving EdD programs. It utilizes the framework of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), the leading international consortium in the contemporary EdD field, to create a practical guide for faculty members and institutions interested in establishing an EdD program that nurtures scholarly practitioners.

Perhaps the strongest feature of the book lies in its central argument that focuses on the necessity for EdD programs to purposefully engage in design and improvement process. First, the book highlights the need for each institution to engage in intentional planning and consideration of its specific context. As the next step, the book guides the reader through the historical context and ongoing debates surrounding the EdD, as an area that has long been unexamined. This sets a clear and thoughtful framework for conceptualizing the EdD as a professional doctoral degree. Through the adoption of the (re)design concept, the book articulates a practical and useful approach for both establishing EdD programs and enhancing existing ones. This approach aims to avoid the historical confusion that linked the EdD to a traditional research doctorate. Instead, the chapters offer a backward mapping strategy for the development of EdD programs, applicable both in the US and internationally.

A unique feature of *Reclaiming the Education Doctorate* is its conceptualization of the EdD as an improvement project, specifically developed with the practitioner in mind. This innovative approach is intertwined into the ten chapters, providing readers with a lens focused on improvement. Beginning with an exploration of the history of the EdD, the first chapters delve into the origins of the confusion surrounding the degree. The narrative reveals how this confusion not only altered the purpose of the EdD but also led to the establishment of institutional systems, both in the United States and abroad, that perpetuated the confusion. In the third chapter, attention is directed toward the establishment of CPED and its mission to transform the doctorate into an advanced professional degree for educational practitioners. The objective is to understand the new EdD by establishing a theory of change for reviving it. This chapter not only presents a systematic model of restoring the degree but also adeptly presents a model of a theory of change. This model can serve as a valuable guide for EdD faculty and program developers is establishing their own program's theory of change. Readers are encouraged to keep the CPED framework in mind and refer to this chapter as a resource during the process of defining their program goals and objectives.

Following the presentation of the EdD (re)design process as an improvement project and an exploration of the problem's roots, chapters five through eight construct a backward mapping of the

process for establishing an EdD program, utilizing the CPED Framework as a foundational guide. In chapter five, the concept of the scholarly practitioner takes center stage as a main objective of EdD preparation, and the role of the Dissertation in Practice in shaping scholarly practitioners is discussed. Chapters six focuses on the formulation of the curriculum necessary for preparing graduates, while chapter seven emphasizes the importance of the admissions process. Building upon this framework, chapter eight then offers insights into best practices for supporting students throughout the program.

The last chapters of the book reflect on the (re)design process, exploring how the CPED framework has been effectively implemented. Chapter nine presents studies that have examined and assessed the ongoing change process, highlighting key program features such as the significance of context, the diversity of signature pedagogies, and various models of the Dissertation in Practice. Finally, chapter ten is specifically tailored for faculty members as agents of change, offering guidance and ideas on establishing their programs, seeking support from colleagues and leadership, and safeguarding against burnout.

In addition, faculty members, administrators, and students will find the additional reading materials and discussion questions at the end of each chapter valuable. These questions serve as a step-by-step guide for group discussions, aiding faculty in aligning their program goals and mission with CPED's design framework. They provide a roadmap for a (re)design process that caters to the unique needs of their students.

A helpful feature in the next edition would be the inclusion of notes or brief blank spaces for the reader to generate their own questions for discussion. I would love to see a template for faculty members to include their notes and reflections in order to build their own (re)design process.

In conclusion, having served as a former EdD graduate assistant and program manager, and now as a faculty member, I find the book's emphasis on supporting faculty in EdD programs particularly intriguing. The underlying theme of the book, accentuating the needs of student practitioners, makes it an invaluable resource for both students and faculty members engaged in EdD programs striving for continuous improvement. Jill Perry's *Reclaiming the Education Doctorate* is crafted in an engaging and systematic way, offering comprehensive information and step-by-step guidance for the development of strong and relevant EdD programs.

REFERENCES

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