Doctoral Preparation for Faculty Roles: Expectations and Realities

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The purpose of this report is to clarify the issues and discongruities between educational preparation of doctoral program graduates and employer expectations (educational institutions), and to stimulate thinking concerning strategies that might be used by doctoral programs to more effectively prepare graduates to deal with an integrated professional role, including that of faculty. (Index words: Doctoral education; Faculty roles; Professional roles) *J Prof Nurs 7:105-111, 1991.* Copyright © 1991 by W.B. Saunders Company

DESPITE the existing diversity and plurality in doctoral education, there is general agreement as to broad goals. These pertain to preparation of nurses who will (a) expand the scientific knowledge base for the field through research and scholarly activities, and (b) serve in leadership capacities in a variety of arenas within the society and nursing (Crowley, 1977).

The prerequisite conditions for the conduct of doctoral study have been described repeatedly in the literature. Among these are environments that are characterized by the freedom to explore ideas and engage in inquiry; collegiality and interaction among members in the scientific community both within and outside the university; philosophical commitment of the institution to science; time to engage in scholarship; and human and material resources (Woods, 1986), among others.

Doctoral students are ostensibly being assisted to be unconventional and creative thinkers, to challenge assumptions and traditions. They are expected to de-velop skills of inquiry and to push the frontiers of knowledge, to tackle intellectual tasks that lack prescription, and to deal with ambiguity in creative ways. The extent to which they are successful in acquiring these skills and attitudes that are requisite to careers as scientists, one might expect that they will experience a certain degree of cognitive dissonance and "reality shock" when they accept employment in settings where these behaviors are either not valued or are relegated to secondary importance.

It is the case that many doctoral graduates accept faculty positions in a variety of educational settings, many of which prepare students for basic practice or for advanced clinical practice–leadership roles at the master's degree level. If doctoral education in a research university focuses on preparing students for the development of new knowledge and internalizing the skills identified earlier, undergraduate and master's degree level study might be viewed as focusing on the transmission and preservation of knowledge. At these levels of study, typically there is a set curriculum and designed experiences through which students progress to meet program objectives and requirements. The transition from doctoral student to faculty member in a college or university cannot be assumed easily, and typically there is very little preparation to equip these individuals for what they will face.

In a report of quality assessment of doctoral programs in nursing, Holzemer (1987) reported some very encouraging trends. Two data waves were compared over a 5-year period (1979 and 1984). The study documented increased faculty productivity in scholarly activities as measured by the indices of publications, presentations, and the like; student GPAs were higher and their career goals included greater interest in pursuit of research. While faculty reported a decrease in time spent in teaching, students perceived an increase in quality of teaching. Concurrent with this, both faculty and students reported an increase in perception of scholarly excellence of their program.

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TABLE 1. Relevant Alumni (N = 294) Data from 1984 National Study

How well did program prepare you for your primary purpose (%)?	
Not very well	3
Fairly well	34
Extremely well	61
Have you published part of the dissertation (%)?	
Yes	52
No	47
Further research in area of dissertation (%)	
Yes	62
No	38
Current use of doctoral training (%)	
Not at all	1
Some	16
Quite a bit	30
A great deal	52
Do you consider yourself underemployed (%)?	
Definitely	6
Somewhat	24
No	64
Time from first enrollment to degree	
Average number of years = 5	

Data from Holzemer (1984).

In the national doctoral program self-assessment* mentioned above, 95 per cent of alumni believe that their program prepared them fairly or extremely well for scholarship and teaching; 52 per cent have already published part of the dissertation; 62 per cent are pursuing research in the area of the dissertation; 82 per cent make quite a bit or a great deal of use of their training. Additional information relevant in this context is presented in Table 1.

These data do not address all indicators of quality in doctoral education, nor is quality necessarily even across programs or even in a given program. They do, however, suggest important improvements over the 5-year period of the study: On the whole, our doctoral programs are doing what they set out to do, what we as a field have said we would like doctoral programs to do. What then is the problem, and why does the issue of preparation versus expectation arise? Is this a positive or a negative state of affairs? Where are the discrepancies, if any, located? What might be done about it?

In order to have a clear "fix" on the problem, one needs to determine exactly what is expected of these

individuals when they assume a faculty position. One dean summed in this manner the expectations a research university holds of its faculty: The university expects that faculty will teach, attend to student concerns, and on the whole, uphold and promote the reputation of the institution; that faculty will develop knowledge, and distinguish themselves as leaders in their respective fields; that faculty will share responsibility for developing the human and financial resources that support their scholarship, and enliven the intellectual and social life of the institution; that they will share in the governance of the university and will contribute to and serve the community and the broader society; that in doing these, faculty will serve as role models to guide future generations of teachers, scholars–scientists, practitioners, and contributing citizens (Dumas, personal communication, 1990).

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The extent to which this set of expectations is valid, the question might be raised as to whether we are adequately preparing doctoral students to meet these expectations. Each doctoral program will need to answer this question for itself, and one might expect variations in how each of us respond to this. Yet, my guess is that we do a much better job of addressing some dimensions of these expectations than others. For example, training for a research career is emphasized, but experiences on how one might contribute to the service mission of an institution, how one might develop into an effective teacher, how to be an effective institutional citizen are on the whole de-emphasized. The fact is that research training is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for effective employment as faculty on a university campus.

The views of faculty and students may be instructive in this regard. Faculty and student views about the perceived and desired emphasis on certain roles, using data from the 1984 national study, is summa-

Twenty-five of the 29 eligible doctoral nursing programs participated in the study; data were obtained from faculty, alumni, and students on 16 quality indicators. Each of the participating schools received a summary of these national data, and a confidential report of its own. In addition, Dr Holzemer has reported various aspects of this study in a series of articles.

rized in Table 2. Using statistical manipulations, Educational Testing Service was able to provide information about whether respondents want more, the same, or less emphasis for certain roles. This was accomplished by subtracting the respondents' desired emphasis from their perceived current emphasis.

It can be seen in Table 2 that the major current emphasis in doctoral programs, according to both students and faculty, is on preparing scholars and researchers, although 26 per cent of students want less emphasis in this area. For the other roles, it can be noted that large proportions of faculty, and especially students, want more emphasis on preparing teachers and "other practitioner" roles. Note the relative congruence of mean scores between desired and current emphasis (columns 1 and 2) for scholar preparation, and the discrepancy between means in columns 1 and 2 for other roles.

How can we approach our instructional task to more adequately prepare our graduates for the multiplicity of roles and responsibilities that will be expected of them? Discrepancies can arise when the employment environment holds different values than does the individual. However, this is by no means the

sole basis of the difficulties that might arise. To some extent it is inherent in the nature of responsibilities of faculty members, and in the fact that the educational program cannot fully prepare individuals for the "practice" world (here "practice" refers to the role of educator). This situation is familiar in other disciplines and fields of endeavor. Many people bridge this gap successfully. It would be a concern only if it leads to incapacity. One can further argue that it is not desirable to completely do away with this gap since one wants any new generation to bring new and fresh ideas and lead the way by stimulating discourse and challenging the status quo.

In examining some figures from the 1984 national study, one can see discrepancies between what students expect to do, and what they in fact do on graduation (Table 3). Note, for example, the discrepancy between preference indicated by students and the primary activity in which alumni are engaged in their present job; 64 per cent of students would like to do research, or combine research and teaching, compared with 36 per cent of alumni who are indeed able to so engage themselves. Similar discrepancies can be noted for teaching and administration endeavors. Also, note

TABLE 2. Program Purpose Report: Data From 1984 National Study (Faculty N = 326; Student N = 642)

	Perceived Current Emphasis	Desired Emphasis	Desired Minus Current Emphasis
Preparing scholars and researchers			
Faculty	$\bar{X} = 4.54$	$\bar{X} = 4.72$	
	2% little	0% little	19% want more
	6% some	2% some	70% want same
	92% considerable	98% considerable	7% want less
Students	$\bar{X} = 4.71$	$\bar{X} = 4.57$	
	1% little	1% little	12% want more
	4% some	6% some	62% want same
	95% considerable	93% considerable	26% want less
Preparing teachers			
Faculty	$\bar{X} = 2.92$	$\bar{X} = 3.46$	
	33% little	14% little	43% want more
	37% some	34% some	52% want same
	30% considerable	52% considerable	4% want less
Students	$\bar{X} = 2.87$	$\bar{X} = 3.47$	
	35% little	18% little	50% want more
	35% some	27% some	36% want same
	29% considerable	54% considerable	13% want less
Preparing other practitioners			
Faculty	$\bar{X} = 2.72$	$\bar{X} = 3.11$	
	42% little	27% little	33% want more
	31% some	33% some	60% want same
	26% considerable	40% considerable	6% want less
Students	$\bar{X} = 2.71$	$\bar{X} = 3.46$	
	42% little	20% little	51% want more
	33% some	25% some	38% want same
	24% considerable	53% considerable	9% want less

NOTE. Response format: 1, none; 2, little; 3, some; 4, considerable; 5, extreme; these were collapsed to three categories for the table. Data from Holzemer (1984).

TABLE 3. Relevant Data From 1984 National Study on Alumni and Students

	Alumni (N = 294)	Students (N = 642)
Current employer (%)		
PhD-granting university	55	
4-year college (non-PhD granting)	20	
Nonprofit agency	12	
Government	4	
Self-employed	3	
Other	4	
Primary activity in present job (%)		
Research	9	
Teaching–research	27	
Teaching	36	
Administration–management	20	
Professional service	3	
Other	2	
Primary purpose in pursuing degree (%)		
Preparation for scholarly research	33	
Preparation for teaching	8	
Preparation for research and teaching	40	
Preparation for professional practice	8	
Personal enrichment/other	9	
Postdoctoral study (%)		
Yes, have had, currently or in past	5	
No	95	
Preferred future employer (%)		
PhD-granting university		45
4-year college (non-PhD granting)		23
Nonprofit agency		13
Government		5
Self-employed		5
Other		4
Preferred future primary job activity (%)		
Research		16
Teaching–research		48
Teaching		12
Administration–management		12
Professional service		10
Other		2
Postdoctoral study (%)		
Yes, would like definitely		38
Yes, if appropriate employment not available		23
No		37

Data from Holzemer (1984).

the discrepancy between alumni responses on their primary purpose in pursuing the degree, and their current activity. The area of postdoctoral study presents another domain of discrepancy between student expectations and reality. While 61 per cent of students would like to do postdoctoral study, only 5 per cent of alumni have done so, or are currently so engaged.

These figures show that new doctorate-holding faculty, by virtue of the expectations they hold and the way they have been socialized, will have a certain degree of role conflict and disillusionment on their employment.

Suggested Strategies for Easing Conflicting Role Demands

Since I speak from the perspective of programs that prepare these graduates, I will address areas for consideration to ease the situation somewhat. A number of approaches can be used to consciously provide students selected experiences to strengthen capability in teaching and service. Those experiences that relate to competence in scholarship are not addressed specifically, given that these already are the focus of the majority of our instructional efforts. Since cost containment is a focal consideration of this conference, and an important reality in all our lives, I will keep this in mind as I develop my points.

INCLUSION OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

It is the case that, in the main, doctoral programs emphasize the provision of research experiences, faculty mentorship in research, and socialization for scholarship. It is possible that mentorship needs to be expanded to other arenas of professional life as well—those that deal with the full range of tripartite missions of a university: research, teaching, service. Any systematic focus on developing consciousness and skills toward the service mission is especially lacking.

There are many opportunities that can be exploited to allow students to engage in teaching. Formal teaching assistant appointments that enable students to actively participate in teaching will provide significant experience as well as serve as an important means of financial aid. However, as schools face budgetary constraints, cutbacks in funding teaching assistant positions occur. What are the alternatives? One approach is to use the faculty salary budget to fund teaching assistant positions, replacing faculty, perhaps in the junior ranks, with graduate students, for activities such as undergraduate clinical laboratory. This has been suggested before (Anderson, 1986), but no data are available on the extent to which this is being tried and evaluated, or indeed, what the view our community might have regarding this option.

Experiences in teaching are provided through presentation to peers in the classroom and at professional conferences. Frequently, faculty members and students coauthor and copresent papers. The faculty member can guide students in preparing appropriately for these by incorporating pedagogic principles, preparation of audio-visual materials, and the like so that this is approached in a systematic and thoughtful manner. We frequently assist students with the substance of their presentations and ignore the approaches

and methods that will make the presentation effective and appealing. Faculty members can be instructive by example in the manner in which they themselves organize, manage, and teach their courses.

Some students might benefit from holding equivalent-type assistantships with nurse executives. This can provide a unique opportunity for observing and participating in professional management activities, an important, yet undervalued component in the development of effective faculty roles.

Assisting the mentor with his or her advisement or teaching responsibilities of students at master's degree or undergraduate levels is an approach that perhaps is not used by many faculty members. If done selectively, this can be mutually beneficial to the mentor and the doctoral student. An example of this kind is supervision of master's degree student research projects, where specific tasks can be identified for doctoral students to oversee.

Some faculty members are very active in helping shape public policy at local, state, or federal levels. Selectively involving students at these arenas can provide valuable experience to students for future roles.

Involving students with reviews and evaluations of journal manuscripts on which faculty serve as referees can provide opportunities for stimulating dialogue and awareness of what is emerging in the field. It is important that the faculty member not abdicate responsibility in the last analysis for the evaluation of the work. One can debate the pros and cons of this, and perhaps discussion will enlighten the issue. It would be particularly useful to hear the views of journal editors in this regard.

While we tend to involve doctoral students in nursing program policy committees, their involvement at the university level tends to be limited. There are many benefits to campus-wide participation in student and institutional governance issues.

ROLE MODELING BY FACULTY

Some faculty are quite effective in balancing a multitude of responsibilities and roles; these individuals have successfully evolved an integrated professional persona and have the skills to function well within organizations while at the same time pursuing their scholarship. Yet, there is a tendency to compartmentalize our dealings with students to the particular project that brought about the partnership, rather than allowing full exposure to what faculties do. While this is easier for students to deal with, it can create an unrealistic picture of how complex and un-

tidy the role of a faculty member is. Both awareness and selective involvement can go a long way in giving students a sense of the total picture. What is required of the faculty role is an integration of responsibilities as opposed to the discrete conduct of roles; this is not only efficient, but it enriches one role by the other. For example, teaching can be enriched by bringing to bear one's research on it; conference presentations can be used as opportunities to develop one's thinking about thorny theoretical or instructional issues, and then sending the paper for publication review. These can be helpful for students even if they have previously occupied faculty positions, since they will be expected to function at a different level on the receipt of the doctorate.

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There is evidence in the literature that nursing faculties experience role strain, and we hear many faculty members complaining about their "different" responsibilities. Deans and administrators are very concerned about this. Yet, carrying multiple roles and responsibilities is a fact of professional life; more and more of our students are carrying multiple roles as well.

POSTDOCTORAL STUDY

As bachelor's degree study prepares students for beginning-level practice, the doctorate prepares individuals for beginning participation in the conduct of science. We tend to forget this and perhaps place unrealistic expectations on our new graduates; postdoctoral study is the generally accepted next step in other fields. The postdoctoral experience is a way of helping people to solidify their research under the mentorship of well-established scientists and helping them to establish a research program. While many doctoral students express the desire to pursue postdoctoral study, very few do indeed do this (Table 3). We need to more actively encourage students in this regard and assist them in locating opportunities.

PRACTICE IN GOAL SETTING

Students can be consciously assisted to set both long-term and short-term specific goals for themselves

in ways that are realistic. They also need active assistance from faculty in time-management techniques. A note of realism and constant practice will serve them well in the future in setting long-term career goals as well as more immediate goals for what needs to be accomplished in a given time span.

USE OF THE STUDENT CULTURE TO PROMOTE NORMS

Students develop a culture of their own that seems to operate quite effectively. Typically, there is no effort on the part of the faculty to influence this at a conscious level. Through informal ways students evolve their own values, norms, and coping approaches. It is possible that there are informal ways of influencing this. We need to be aware that each time we interact with individuals or groups of students and make pronouncements, we are exercising an influence, and not necessarily only on those we are interacting with; every encounter is a teaching and learning opportunity. In order for this to be effective, the faculty as a group need to be of a similar mind with regard to the norms and values to be inculcated. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

INCORPORATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS MATERIAL THAT DEALS WITH CAREER PLANNING AND MANAGING THE TRIPARTITE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY

Examples of this are topics concerned with ways of managing one's career and research trajectory, the advantages and issues related to collaborative research, and the like. An important part of socialization is to understand the dilemma inherent in being a full-fledged scientist and the attendant professional and social responsibilities of the role, and to develop ways of integrating conflicting demands in a satisfying manner. Also, students need assistance in making careful discriminations between various job offers, and to seek employment in settings that are congruent with their career goals.

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR REPORTS

Identify relevant papers and national reports that have bearing on our work, make these available to faculty and/or students, and provide opportunities for discussion of the issues raised. An example of this is the recent report from the National Academy of Sciences (1989), *On Being a Scientist*. This report discusses the methods and values of science and raises a number of interesting issues that can stimulate discourse. Other examples include national reports on the nursing shortage, reports on higher education, etc.

This type of approach helps us take a respite from

our everyday struggles, and view our work from a different, even loftier, perspective; it helps us place our efforts within a larger context. Exchanges between faculty over time also open the possibility of evolving shared group norms about important issues that can then be passed on to students with a certain degree of coherence and consistency.

Problems and Pitfalls in Implementing the Above Strategies

The approaches identified above are not without pitfalls and risks; a few are identified here:

1. The kinds of experiences described above presume that the student will be on-site and available to take advantage of these opportunities. In fact, there is a growing trend toward part-time study, with some programs reporting close to a 100 per cent part-time student body. This means that students are typically working, parenting, or doing other things and have schedules as tight as those of faculty members. This makes it more difficult for both faculty and students to use and exploit opportunities that arise.

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2. There is danger that some faculties might abdicate their responsibilities and hand their work to doctoral students instead of overseeing it as a growth experience. One way to avoid this is for students and faculty to negotiate in advance what each of them will do, develop timelines, and adhere to them.
3. Many doctoral programs at the moment have a mature doctoral student body. In the last few years we have noted that our newly admitted students have a mean age of 35 to 40. We offer a postbaccalaureate PhD; despite this, the majority of applicants and those admitted have master's degrees, with approximately 6 to 10 years of work experience following it. They are seasoned professionals in many ways and their supervision is a pleasure for most faculty; there is most definitely a peer relationship among students and faculty. When the trends change in

our field, and they are bound to do so, and 21-year-old graduates begin entering doctoral study, the types of experiences I have described will be more time-consuming both for faculty and students. Different approaches may then be required, although this will likely present new opportunities of its own.

4. In making assignments to doctoral level courses and research advisement there is always a risk, a dilemma, when one assigns faculty members who themselves are still struggling with ways of integrating their different roles and are in the process of establishing themselves as scholars and teachers.

5. By the time they complete degree requirements, many students are weary of being students, and ready to earn a decent wage and the attendant perks it promises; thus, the prospect of another year or two of postdoctoral study does not seem appealing. This, in the long analysis, is a personal decision. Yet, faculty counseling can help students see this in a broader, long-term perspective. We also need to examine the length of time it takes students to graduate; perhaps if we shorten the number of years (national mean is 5 years, see Table 1), there might be greater energy and enthusiasm for postdoctoral training.

None of the measures I have identified will fully prepare individuals for the complex faculty roles that await them. We must inculcate an ethos for lifelong learning as well as an ongoing need for self-renewal. These attitudes, combined with the strategies mentioned above, will provide students with a sound foundation to build on, enabling them to benefit from the assistance that employing institutions or senior colleagues might provide.

Acknowledgment

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