Editorial

Professional Doctorates in Education: exploring the tensions and opportunities for those in leadership

Special Edition Editors: Gerry Czerniawski – University of East London

Nick Pratt – Plymouth University

Katy Vigurs – Staffordshire University

The growth in professional doctorates over the last 25 years is well-documented as are the forms, fields, disciplines and methodologies that such doctorates embrace. Factors said to influence the emergence of these alternative doctoral pathways include the growth of the knowledge economy; the marketization of education; the rapidly changing role of higher education and its internationalisation; and developments in technology (Chiteng and Hendel, 2012; Zusman, 2013). Each factor brings with it challenges for those staff involved in running professional doctorates in Education (EdD). Ranging from the clinical to the more research focused award, the EdD is situated within what Scott et al. (2004) call the 'twilight zone' – a place somewhere between the university and workplace often reflecting dissonance between these two cultures of learning (Scott et al., 2004: 3; see also Pratt et al., 2014).

Within the backdrop of competing discourses associated with globalisation and austerity, arguments for the supply and demand for Doctorates in Education are often positioned and justified by economism rather than those associated with professional capital and capacity building. Many students on professional doctoral programmes are senior members of staff in schools and colleges who study their doctorates part time. For those working in Universities the professional doctorate plays its part in professional identity formation as colleagues formally employed in schools and colleges move into new roles working within the Academy (Burgess et al., 2011). Leaders of professional doctorates in education have to cater for both audiences navigating between their professional values regarding excellence in doctoral practice and those values associated with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the marketability and sustainability of doctoral courses. To further complicate things, leaders also have to trace a similar fine line in relation to their own university leaders, many of whom will only have personal experience of the PhD and may not fully understand the issues and implications of professional doctorates.

This special edition seeks to address a gap in the literature on Professional Doctorates (PDs) in Education by focusing on the challenges and opportunities for those involved in the leadership of Doctorates in Education. The authors of each article, in different ways, focus on these challenges, including, but not limited to:

- The ways in which professional doctorates are understood in universities, workplaces, and the implications for managing and marketing them.

- The relationship between credentialism and practice and the roles of the various stakeholders in PDs.

- The nature of research on PDs and implications for managing this in the current HE and professional policy arenas.

- Managing the assessment of PDs and the tensions between academic and workplace practices.

- The role of theory in PDs and the implications for the design and management of programmes.

In the first article of this special edition **Claire Tupling** and **Deborah Outhwaite** consider the challenges encountered by a recently appointed assistant programme leader in establishing an identity as a leader of an EdD programme. Their paper tracks some of the commonplace behaviours around such learning, in a post-1992 institution, and the authors discuss the implications for EdD leadership and management teams, when trying to consider and implement changes to established organizational cultures. **Val Poultney** employs a reflexive methodology to critically examine the opportunities and challenges raised for a leader of a UK EdD programme when the home institution undertakes short periods of intensive teaching abroad, a model known as 'flying faculty'. In their article, **Carol Johansson** and **Sridevi Yerrabati** review the literature to explore the elements of supervisory styles for further discussions drawing on 83 previous studies relating to research degrees including professional doctorates. It is important to note that a systematic review was not conducted for this article, rather the 83 papers are a part of a systematic review that was conducted to retrieve a parent study on professional doctorates. **Poppy Gibson, Rehana Shanks and Suzie Dick** focus on the ever-present pressures, tensions and opportunities for women leaders in education, and the link between identity, pursuit of excellence and the pursuit of a complete, worthwhile life (Nussbaum, 2005). Their article highlights the implications of leadership, including capabilities from a gendered perspective and the impact and challenges in navigating the 'twilight zone'. **Helen Goodall**, **Valerie Huggins, Louise Webber** and **Karen Wickett** consider the experiences and perspectives of four female academics who are the first graduates of a new Professional Doctorate programme at a University in the South West of England. The authors position themselves simultaneously as researchers and research participants, engaging in collaborative autoethnography to critically reflect on their experiences. Their paper concludes with a discussion of the potential implications of their experiences for leaders of Professional Doctorates. In their paper, **Kate Mawson** and **Ian Abbot** discuss issues of identity for part-time professional doctoral students, developing the idea that supervision for competent, confident professionals may be suited in the early stages to a focus on identity and participation in addition to progress and process. Within their article the authors explore the way in which professional doctorates are supervised with a view to developing an alternative model for the leadership and supervision of these programmes that supports the competent professional with both progression and identity formation. The final paper in this special edition comes from **Denise Hawkes, Carol Johansson** and **Catherine McSweeney.** Studies of the interaction between professional and academic staff in leadership in Higher Education Institutions have focused on Distributed Leadership. Whilst such studies have considered the leadership of the whole university, aspects of this model also apply to the relationship between programme leaders and administrators. In their exploratory study the authors explore the usefulness of this model in leadership of professional doctorates.

The special edition ends with an interview with **Dr Kulvarn Atwal**, Headteacher at Highlands Primary School, Ilford, London, who kindly gave his time to offer his experience of undertaking the EdD as a school leader. **Chris Oates**, reports this interview, giving a perspective from a slightly different angle on issues of leadership in relation to Professional Doctorates.

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