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Ed.D. Socialization Contexts: Origins, Evolving Purpose, Demographic Trends, and Institutional Practices

Zarrina Talan Azizova
University of North Dakota, zarrina.azizova@UND.edu

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Ed.D. Socialization Contexts

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Zarrina Talan Azizova

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Today's Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) programs battle to resolve widespread confusion and uncertainty about their identity under the research university roof and their purpose within and outside academia. Such conditions create a perplexing academic and professional socialization context for doctoral students. According to scholars, socialization is an important and inevitable process in doctoral training (Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2008, 2009; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Golde & Dore, 2001; Mendoza, 2007; Mendoza & Gardner, 2010; Weidman & Stein, 2003; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Tierney (2008) further proposes a postmodern view of academic and professional socialization in order to understand it as a meaning-making act on the part of doctoral students who make sense of their degrees and academic/professional experience through their own unique backgrounds and current contexts in which their programs/institutions reside.

However, research examining academic and professional socialization as a meaning-making act of students in education doctorate programs is scarce. Yet students' perceptions and interpretations of what this degree means to them academically and professionally—and whether these two are separate terms—can broaden perspectives of education scholars and practitioners and offer some clarifications regarding the evolving and highly debated purpose of the Ed.D. degree.

Mills (1959) once asserted that the exercise of *sociological imagination* might promise a deeper understanding of a problem/phenomenon when three elements are connected: history, society, and an individual meaning-making act. Gubrium and Holstein (1997) further acknowledge the specific roles of history, society, and institutional structures in one's meaning making. Therefore, this chapter serves to fulfill a conceptual prerequisite for future research on Ed.D. students' meaning making of the purpose and utility of the Ed.D. degree and their academic/professional socialization during the course of study. I will configure a broader context for the education doctorate by examining its historical origins, evolving purposes, demographic trends, and issues related to the projections of the Ed.D. degree by schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDE). I will conclude with a discussion of implications and provide recommendations for future research on Ed.D. programs and students.

CONTEXT

The first Ed.D. degree was conferred by Harvard University in 1921. Ninety years later, Harvard ended its Ed.D. program and replaced it with the traditional Ph.D. with certain areas of specialization in education in an effort to end confusion between the two doctoral degrees (Basu, 2012). Indeed, debates over the feasibility of offering Ed.D. degrees in colleges, schools, and departments of education that also award Ph.D. degrees have been proliferating (Evans, 2007; Levine, 2005; Olson & Clark, 2009; Shulman, 2007; Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006). The debates stem from a number of biases, including: (1) a perception of the Ed.D. as a "low-end Ph.D.," which contributes to the inferiority complex, (2) convoluted purposes and requirements of the Ed.D. that attempt to differentiate between the preparation of scholars and the preparation of leading practitioners, and (3) limitations that restrict dissertations to "soft," applied research for degree completion (Lin, Wang, Spalding, Klecka, & Odell, 2011; Shulman et al., 2006). An important observation here is that the primary stakeholders—Ed.D. students themselves—are absent from those debates.

Yet those students should be involved as the ones who explain their choice and the academic/professional utility of this degree. Neither research studies nor public media address voices of Ed.D. recipients. Instead, these debates illustrate a top-down approach to decision making on the part of university-based academicians—usually Ph.D. holders—who decide which degree, and why, deserves to remain in school catalogues, why it should remain, and whether to offer reforming strategies. The roots of such decision making in education are historic and therefore warrant a deeper examination so as to strengthen our understanding of forces that

have been shaping the Ed.D. degree in its longstanding struggle between the two prescribed professional identities: the pure academic or the strictly professional.

HISTORY AND EVOLVING PURPOSE OF THE ED.D.

From the mid-nineteenth century on, American higher education began to undergo two parallel developments: the integration of normal schools to prepare qualified teachers for secondary education, and the creation of a robust research system within institutions of higher learning. These two developments had competing interests (Oakes & Rogers, 2001), a circumstance that eventually affected doctoral degrees in education.

Specifically, in the second half of the twenty-first century, secondary school enrollment grew substantially and thus created a greater need for qualified teachers (Borrowman, 1965). In 1859, Illinois Normal University led the transformation of normal schools from secondary-level institutions to institutions of higher learning (Borrowman, 1965). For the first time, an academic discourse took shape around the need to recognize education as a field of study within university curricula. Charles Kendall Adams's (1888/1965) famous address to the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools serves as one of the few examples of this discourse. He called for the teaching of pedagogy in colleges and universities and proposed a specific curriculum for courses such as history of education, philosophy of education, methods in school reform, and teachers' seminars. Some prominent university presidents and reformers of the time—including Charles Eliot and Stanley Hall, to name a few—actively participated in these academic discussions, raising the question of whether education could be seen as a science and thus become a university discipline (Borrowman, 1965).

The publication of Josiah Royce's essay "Is There a Science of Education?" (1981/1965) signified university scholars' growing attention to pedagogical studies and a move toward collaboration with public school practitioners and normal school teachers. Yet despite the presence of nascent schools and departments of education on university campuses, the skepticism about the academic nature of education remained strong among university-based academicians (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Thus the conflicting ideas about whether education was an academic, university-level discipline or merely a professional preparation, became central in the establishment and development of colleges, schools, and departments of education.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, John Dewey (1904/1965), together with a few others, called for the implementation of a laboratory-school concept in the universities' schools of education to connect teacher preparation with practice. James Earl Russell, the dean of Columbia University's Teachers College from

1897 to 1927, followed this sentiment in an essay (1924/1965) addressing the dichotomy between academic and professional purposes of degrees in education. Russell attempted to clarify that "The academically-minded teacher asks what the subject will do for the student; the professionally-minded teacher asks what the student will do with the subject" (p. 210). Furthermore, he called for a resolution of the conflict, suggesting that "academic training is the foundation upon which all professional training rests" (p. 212). Research universities met such a vision of practice-based academic preparation with resistance. However, beginning in the mid-1950s, the connection between teachers' academic preparation and practice became institutionalized in various forms. For example, in 1962, Stanford professor Robert Bush used the term "clinical professor in education" for the first time (Hearn & Anderson, 2001).

Concurrent with those developments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American universities began to be profoundly influenced by the German model of a research university and began the rapid development of graduate programs domestically. A doctoral degree was conferred by Yale University in 1869–1870 (Geiger, 2005), marking the beginning of the path toward today's highly specialized doctoral programs. The Yale degree was the first of a total of 163,765 terminal degrees awarded to students thus far, according to the most recent records (Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

As scholarship gained prestige on American campuses in the early twentieth century, professional schools, colleges, and departments of education began launching graduate-level programs as well (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). The first doctoral degree in education was the Doctor of Philosophy, awarded by Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1893 (Shulman et al., 2006). Years later, Harvard established the Ed.D. degree, based on the rationale that education should have its own separate title from the arts and sciences (Dill & Morrison, 1985).

By the year 1931, the Ed.D. (as a substitute for the Ph.D. in education) became available at six research-oriented institutions: Boston University, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the University of Southern California, and Stanford (Freeman, 1931). Other universities offered both degrees in education. The requirements of the Ed.D. were different from those of traditional Ph.D. degrees and were designed to address the professional rather than the pure academic nature of the studies. At all those institutions, the Ed.D.s did not include two foreign language requirements but required professional experience and "a thesis which organizes existing knowledge instead of discovering new truth" (Freeman, 1931, p. 1). In its official report of 1931, Johns Hopkins University stated specifically that Ed.D. dissertations should be problem-driven and solution-oriented and emphasize, for example, "new techniques for evaluating pupil-growth, or teacher-growth" or "prediction of success in the selection of electives in high schools" (p. 131).

Stanford University (1931) articulated the difference between two degrees, stating that "the Ph.D. stands for ability in pure science, the Ed.D. for ability in applied science" (Freeman, 1931, p. 145). Moreover, as far as the requirement of professional experience was concerned, Stanford clarified that "it [the Ed.D] is a little more difficult to obtain than the Ph.D." (p. 144). In addition, in some institutions the distinction between the two degrees stemmed from each degree's affiliation with either schools of education or graduate colleges. Schools of education tended to oversee Ed.D. degrees, while graduate colleges governed the Ph.D. degrees in education (for example, Indiana University).

Common perceptions of career tracks of Ed.D. and Ph.D. holders were different as well. For example, Harvard's report about its graduate degrees in education stated:

> It is true that most candidates for the Doctor's degree in education at Harvard, as at other institutions, eventually become college teachers of education. Very likely something ought to be done to develop their competence to teach in colleges and universities or to enter into college or university administration. This has seemed to the Harvard faculty, however, a distinct and separate task. The Doctor's degree is granted at Harvard solely as a reward for work that has as its final concrete result, a thesis that expands our knowledge or adds to our understanding of education. (Freeman, 1931, p. 118)

In addition, Johns Hopkins University outlined more specifically the difference in career expectations. While Ph.D. students were prepared for the kind of education research that is necessary for university-based careers, Ed.D. students received cultural and professional training that is important to school settings.

Overall, this historical sketch illustrates that the Ed.D. emerged as a "modified version" of the Ph.D., subsequently contributing to a widespread belief among the opponents of Ed.D.s that this degree was a less-demanding alternative to the Ph.D. degree. They argued that the Ed.D. required fewer academic credits and offered only professional rather than academic career trajectories. Today, however, whatever distinctions still exist between the two degrees have become blurred. Studies undertaken at various times (Anderson, 1983; Deering, 1998; Osguthorpe & Wong, 1993) have found that the differences in research and credit requirements have been disappearing for the last 4 decades. In addition, there has been an increase in faculty career options that are equally accessible to Ed.D. and Ph.D. holders. Moreover, the emphasis on applied research addressing and solving critical issues in public schools has extended to Ph.D. programs as well.

In the wake of a growing scrutiny of Ed.D. degrees (Levine, 2005; Shulman et al., 2006), the Carnegie Foundation has launched an initiative to provide helpful clarifications about the purpose of the Ed.D., the "professional doctoral in education [that] prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation of new knowledge, and for the stewardship of the profession"

(Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2014). As is evident in this definition, the generation of new knowledge becomes the indispensable element of academic and professional training in Ed.D. programs.

This very likely takes place as a result of the impact of a knowledge-based economy on higher education, as well as changing assumptions of what constitutes knowledge. Within the knowledge-based economy context, research in education is expected to generate pragmatic knowledge such as solutions to public school problems, predictions of pupil success in an increasingly diverse and complex learning environment, and tested pedagogies and school practices. Kennedy (2001) takes a philosophical approach, asserting that "Education is a public good and consequently education ideas must be evaluated against all of society's regulative ideals, not just against a criterion of truth" that is a single regulative ideal of higher education institutions (p. 46). She further states that because education is a public good, education researchers face a constant need to address shifting social norms and other political and demographic trends. Therefore, education research demands the generation of new knowledge derived from problem-based research that will build the state's capacity to provide solutions and improvements to social and economic problems in public education in a timely manner.

Such focus on the creation of useful and practical knowledge exemplifies the need for a purposeful engagement between university research and the socioeconomic fabric of K–12 public education. To illustrate this, Oakes and Rogers (2001) provide a contemporary case study of the University of California's engagement in building the capacity of the state's K–12 system by reconfiguring education programs' activities and integration of education theory, research, graduate studies, and professional practice. The university places equal emphasis on both the purely academic aspects of education research and the professional practice in education, perhaps signifying that the historical dichotomy between research and professional practice can finally be reconciled. The need for problem-based research is a result of the growing complexity of K–12 settings, a situation that warrants some discussion in this chapter.

DEMOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE

Demographics are important indicators of who articulates education problems, who seeks research-driven solutions, and who is affected by education research. I will begin this section by exploring the K–12 demographic context as a preamble to the demographic context of Ed.D. programs. It is important to address current and projected changes in elementary and secondary settings, as these changes shape public policy as well as the research and practice of education researchers—education faculty and doctoral students alike. Issues that require research- and

evaluation-driven answers, decisions, and practice are increasingly complex, as they are linked to demographic shifts, poverty, lack of academic preparedness, inadequate public funding, shifting public opinion, standards-based teacher performance, and accountability, to name a few.

K–12 Trends

Overall, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) projects an annual increase of 7% in total enrollment in public elementary schools and 5% in public secondary schools from the fall of 2012 to the fall of 2021 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). Spending per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools in constant 2011–2012 dollars increased from about $5,000 to $11,000 from 1971 to 2010. The expenditure of gross domestic product on elementary and secondary education grew from $110 billion to about $550 billion over the last 40 years, or 4.5% of GDP in 2011. An increase in the number of public schools to approximately 15,600 took place between 1989 and 2007 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). These changes simply reinforce the axiom that when the expenditure of public dollars grows, calls for public accountability get louder as well.

At the same time, public schools operate within a more complex sociodemographic fabric. Under the Disability Education Act, today's schools open the doors of traditional classrooms to pupils with disabilities. This group constitutes about 13% of total enrollment, which is a significant increase from the 8.3% reported in 1977. According to the data of 2010, 60.5% of pupils with disabilities spend more than 80% of their educational time inside mainstream classrooms, which is a significant change from the corresponding figure of 31.7% in 1989 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). Such a finding suggests that today's teachers are required to have more formal preparation in teaching pupils with special needs.

Other demographic categories have been growing rapidly in public education. Public K–12 schools receive more pupils from Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander populations and non-English-speaking communities. The percentage of Hispanic pupils grew from 13.6% to 23.1% between 1995 and 2010 and is projected to increase to 26.7% by the year 2021 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). Asian/Pacific Islander attendance also shows a change from 3.7% to a projected 5.9% by the year 2021 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). An increase in enrollment of racial/ethnic minority pupils is evidenced in public schools by a higher percentage of students receiving free or reduced-rate lunches, while the enrollment of White pupils is significantly lower in such schools. To illustrate, schools with a 75% or higher eligibility rate for free or reduced-price lunches exhibit the following pattern of racial/ethnic enrollment: 6.2% White, 41.4% Black, 38% Hispanic, 14.5% Asian, 19.2% Pacific Islander, and 31.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). These enrollment figures do not add to 100% because some students identified with more than one racial/ethnic enrollment category.

Furthermore, pupils eligible for free or reduced-price lunches have lower writing achievement levels than noneligible pupils. A closer look reveals that only 54% of Black pupils eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, as compared to 71% of noneligible Black pupils, achieve proficiency in writing. Similar trends are evident in other racial/ethnic groups: 59% of eligible Hispanic pupils as compared to 74% of noneligible Hispanic pupils; 66% of eligible American Indian/Alaskan Native pupils as compared to 86% of noneligible American Indian/Alaskan Native pupils; and 76% of eligible White pupils as compared to 88% of noneligible White pupils. Academic performance is significantly lower for Black and Hispanic students in mathematics as well. Performance in the highest-level mathematics courses by 17-year-olds indicates that only 1% of Black pupils and 1% of Hispanic pupils achieve a score of 350 or above, as compared to 8% of White pupils, where a score of 350 or higher indicates proficiency in solving multistep problems with the use of algebra (National Science Foundation, 1996).

In addition to the problems of higher poverty and lower academic preparedness, dropout rates remain higher for Black and Hispanic pupils: 7.3% and 13.6%, respectively, compared to 5.1% of their White counterparts. Such a situation demands teachers' attention and immediate intervention, especially given the fact that education policy mandates that schools and teachers close achievement gaps between minority and non-minority pupils and between socioeconomically disadvantaged and more advantaged children (No Child Left Behind, 2002). The education policy places a major focus on teacher quality and qualifications, which are believed to be essential to pupil achievement and school improvement. Public school students, parents, and community organizations challenge the implementation of "highly qualified" teacher provisions, noting the large proportion of alternatively certified teachers in schools located in low-income and minority districts (*Renee v. Duncan*, 2010; *Renee v. Duncan*, 2012; *Renee v. Spellings*, 2008).

Not surprisingly, the number of teachers seeking advanced degrees in education is trending upward. The increasing percentage of master's and specialist degree holders—from 23.1% in 1961 to 60.4% in 2006 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013)—indicates teachers' investment in specialized training and preparation for teaching occupations. However, only a very few teachers hold doctoral degrees: 0.8% of White teachers, 2% of Black teachers, and 1.1% of Hispanic teachers (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). Income incentives for teachers to attain doctoral degrees are quite weak: those teachers with a doctorate earn an average annual salary of $59,200 compared to $58,400 for those with education specialist qualifications and $54,800 for master's degree holders. However, the difference in income is more significant between teachers with bachelor's degrees ($43,600) and master's or specialist degrees. Despite a growing Hispanic pupil population and a need for qualified Hispanic teachers to serve as role models, Hispanic teachers lag in

master's-level qualifications—34.1% as compared to their White (45.7%) and Black (41.4%) colleagues (Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

The teacher's profile in public schools has been changing in other respects as well. Teachers become more vocal, articulating their perceptions of problems that occur in their schools. Pupils' unpreparedness to learn, poverty, and lack of parental involvement are among the most frequently reported problems (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). While the economic incentives for teachers to attain the doctoral degree are weak, can their personal experience and desire to resolve educational problems be powerful enough to cause them to explore solutions through the pursuit of a doctoral degree in education? As Labaree (2003) observes, most teachers state that their goal of pursuing doctoral studies is to improve schools. This warrants an examination of the profile of a typical doctoral student in education.

Ed.D. Students

Projections of overall higher education enrollment from 2008 to 2019 anticipate an increase in minority representation (Hussar & Bailey, 2011). Demographic shifts in all doctoral programs are already apparent (Bell, 2011; Hussar & Bailey, 2011; Snyder & Dillow, 2013). According to available data, 57,047 doctoral students were enrolled in graduate programs in education in the fall of 2010, and they comprised 17% of total graduate enrollment across all graduate programs in higher education. Total graduate enrollment in education breaks down as follows: Whites 63.4%, Black/African American 12.4%, Hispanic 8.2%, Asian 2.7%, American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.6%, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders 0.4%, persons of two or more races 1.4%, and unknown ethnicities/races 10.4%. The annual average increase for total graduate enrollment in education is evident in figures for 2000 to 2010: Asian/Pacific Islanders 5.6%, Hispanic/Latino 4.5%, Black/African American 3.8%, White 0.9%, and American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.3%.

Overall, education as a field awards about 13.3% of doctoral degrees (Bell, 2011). Women receive a higher percentage of doctorates than men—68% compared to 32% (Bell, 2011), which has been a growing trend since the mid-1980s. The academic year 2010–2011 produced 3,064 male and 6,559 female graduates of doctoral programs in education (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). In comparison, 797 men and only 156 women received doctoral degrees in education during the 1949–1950 academic year (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). During the academic year 2010–2011, doctoral programs in education awarded 71% of their degrees to White graduates, 14.4% to Blacks, 6.2% to Hispanics, 4.5% to Asian/Pacific Islanders, 0.5% to American Indians/Alaskan Natives, 1.8% to persons of two or more races, and 1.6% to students of unknown ethnicities/races (Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

According to available data, between 2008 and 2010, the typical doctoral student profile in education was a White woman (68.6%) returning to doctoral

education 12.5 years after starting graduate education and 16.2 years after the completion of a bachelor's degree. The typical doctoral student in education was about 40 years old, which is older in comparison to other fields. Most students were enrolled part time while maintaining jobs outside of academia. The profile of a doctoral student in education is unique in other respects as well. For example, the choice of a primary work activity after completion of the degree differs somewhat from other fields. Education doctorates tend to choose teaching (42.9%) as a primary activity, followed by management and administration (37.7%). Education doctorates allocate only 9.9% of their activity to research as a graduate assistant work option, yet 35.1% of doctoral graduates choose employment in a postsecondary educational institution (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). This post-graduation professional trend can be explained by work norms generally held by faculty in colleges, schools, and departments of education.

Faculty of Education Profile

As Tierney (2001) observes, education faculty usually rank last in hours spent on research and publish fewer refereed articles than faculty in any other academic/professional field. Education faculty, however, rank high in time spent on administrative duties (Tierney, 2001). Indeed, compared to other professional fields and schools, education faculty tend to have somewhat unique employment trends. First, tenure distribution in education indicates that there are fewer tenured faculty as compared to their counterparts in other fields, except in health sciences (National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 2004). Specifically, in institutions with a tenure system, tenured faculty constitute about 36.1% of total faculty; those not on tenure track make up 32.6%; and those on tenure track make up 24.7%. About 6.6% of education faculty are employed by institutions without a tenure system. The field of education has joined the growing trend of hiring more part-time faculty, which decreases the number of full-time, tenure-track positions across the board (Tierney, 2001).

Second, education faculty are more likely to be females than males, with the largest difference observed in part-time modes of employment: 41.7% of full-time faculty are males, and 58.3% of full-time faculty are females. In contrast, 34.2% of part-time faculty are males, and 65.8% of part-time faculty are females (NSOFP, 2004).

Third, figures for full-time faculty in education show a slightly higher percentage of Black faculty compared to the overall demographic of faculty in higher education. Race/ethnicity of education faculty is distributed as follows: White 80.5%, Black 7.8%, Hispanic 4.7%, Asian/Pacific Islander 4.8%, and American Indian/Alaskan Native 2.2% (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). In teacher education programs specifically, White males and females make up 22.2% and 63.9% of

faculty respectively, Black males and females make up 0.9% and 6.4% respectively, Hispanic males and females make up 1.3% and 2.2% respectively, and American Indian/Alaskan Native females make up 1.6% of faculty (Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

Overall, the composite faculty profile reveals some uniqueness. Collectively, education faculty are more practice-oriented than research-oriented, and about one quarter of them do not have to perform traditional tenure-track duties.

INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

Generally held values regarding education programs have historically revolved around the dichotomy of understanding education as a field of practice and as a field of study, a situation that is likely to create ambiguous academic and professional socialization cultures for students. Some scholars (Labaree, 2003; Neumann, Pallas, & Peterson, 1999) suggest that doctoral students in education experience a conflict between their professional identities as teachers and the respective research cultures of their doctoral programs, which warrants a more nuanced understanding of students' meanings. Kennedy (2001) comments on this contemporary conflict, stating that "education programs have tried valiantly to conform to university norms, but because of the tension between knowledge warranted through formal research methods and knowledge warranted through personal experience," education programs still find it difficult to fit comfortably into higher education institutions (p. 29). However, as Arthur Levine (2001) predicts, the research agenda in colleges, schools, and departments of education will be increasingly field- or practice-oriented, and, as a consequence, doctoral research training in education should also go in that direction.

Yet in the wake of a growing scrutiny of doctoral education, various colleges, schools, and departments of education are attempting to restructure and reform their doctoral programs to distinguish the scientific nature of the Ph.D. from the professional nature of the Ed.D. (Shulman et al., 2006). Some CSDEs differentiate their degrees to address students' enrollment patterns: while Ph.D. students tend toward a full-time residency mode of study, Ed.D. students are simply deprived of such an opportunity because of their commitment to outside employment (Lin et al., 2011). Such differentiation in student enrollment contributes to an intentional conceptualization of the purposes of the two degrees as distinct: the Ph.D. is for the preparation of "researchers," and the Ed.D. is for "the preparation of advanced school practitioners" (Lin et al., 2011, p. 23). Consequently, the "pedagogy of the leader-scholar community," "program design and evaluation of effectiveness," and "scholar-practitioner" are a few examples of new terms evident in the reform discourse geared toward the Ed.D. degree (Golde, 2007; Lin et al., 2011; Olson & Clark, 2009; Shulman, 2007; Shulman et al., 2006).

A troubling aspect of these conversations is the fact that these reforms and discussions are predominantly academic, zooming biases and concerns over the preservation of prestige and legacy of Ph.D. degrees. Decisions on restructuring Ed.D. degrees continue to originate in the idea of what the Ed.D. should *not* be, as compared to the Ph.D. in education. This approach cannot yield useful outcomes for Ed.D. programs, nor can it help students navigate cultural nuances for a meaningful academic and professional socialization experience and a distinct professional identity development.

IMPLICATIONS

In attempting to distinguish graduate-level provisions for academic preparation and for professional preparation, colleges, schools, and departments of education have made the usual error of comparing the Ed.D. degree with the Doctor of Philosophy, and such a failure to create a distinct identity for Ed.D. programs may send conflicting messages to doctoral students in these programs. As Guthrie (2009) asserts, the Ed.D. degree "deserves a distinct purpose, program standing, and pride" (p. 8). Evans (2007) clarifies that continuing to conceptualize practitioner and scholar activities as dichotomous does not help either degree in education articulate clearly its identity. He proposes that "we would do better to think in terms of a unitary scholar-educator class or set of activities to which people make differential contributions according to time, talents, interests, and abilities" (p. 555).

Indeed, the reforms of the Ed.D. might need to merge the macro and micro social dimensions of the issue at stake. That is, the conversations need to begin with the acknowledgment of history, shedding light on the origins and evolution of the confusion of purposes and intentions of Ed.D. degrees. Then the focus needs to be placed solely on the complex socioeconomic context in which contemporary programs reside and on the constituencies who are rightfully demanding research-driven solutions for public school improvements. Finally, the conversation needs to engage one of the primary stakeholders of learning and research processes—the Ed.D. doctoral students themselves. As Pallas (2001) contends, education programs should stop viewing doctoral students "as passive recipients" (p. 7). Instead, programs need to recognize students' personal epistemology, specialized knowledge, experience, expertise, skills, and abilities (Labaree, 2003; Pallas, 2001).

Weaving all three elements into reforming decisions may help the Ed.D. degree achieve a distinct and unique academic/professional identity. To accomplish these tasks, more research on students themselves is essential. Future research on the education doctorate should probe Ed.D. students' perceptions and meanings concerning their choice of the degree, their academic experiences in their

programs, and the potential utilization of attained as well as generated knowledge in their professional settings.

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