

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 3, Number 7, 1991-92

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

The Market for Teaching Scholars

Laurie Richlin, *Visiting Scholar, Antioch College*

The disparity between the research training of the PhD students who become the next generation of faculty and the need for those new faculty to be able to teach has led to increased dissatisfaction among the deans and department chairs who hire them. The on-the-job activities of new faculty members call for knowledge and skills not inherent in the standard PhD program. In all fields, at all institutions, the greatest need is for scholars to teach undergraduates. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of American faculty never publish anything after their dissertation material.

In order to broaden the perspective of faculty efforts, Boyer (1990) and Rice (1990) have proposed four types of scholarship necessary for the American faculty:

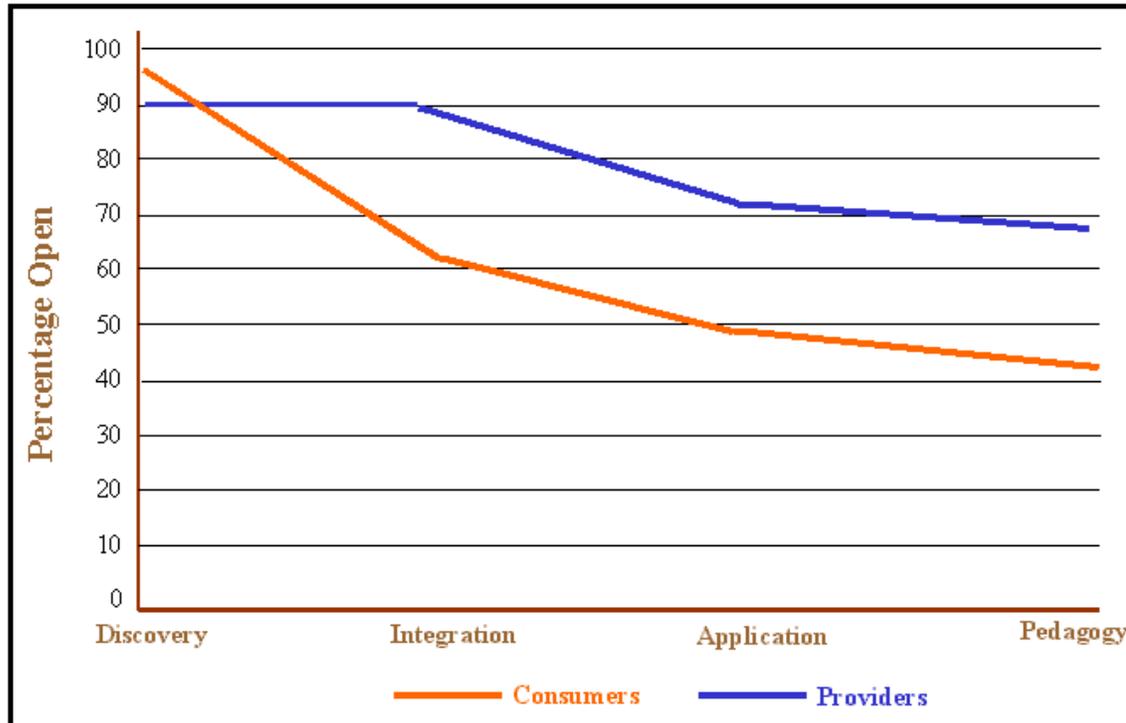
1. DISCOVERY, the search for new facts; creation of new knowledge/new theory in a disciplinary specialization;
2. INTEGRATION, synthesis of disparate views and information in a disciplinary specialization;
3. APPLICATION, reflection on practice; creation of new paradigms of professional competence; and
4. PEDAGOGY, representation of knowledge; creation of new ways to draw the field together to connect knower and learner.

Boyer (1990) calls for having all four types of scholarship active within American higher education institutions, suggesting that individual schools could specialize in particular scholarships, or that

faculty members could focus on different scholarships during various stages of their careers. Unfortunately, programs that award the PhD degree, the "union card" for faculty, have been designed predominantly to train graduate students to perform and value only one type of scholarship: acquisition of new knowledge. Certainly the large majority of faculty who never publish anything during their careers, except that which comes out of their dissertation research, shows of how little interest that type of scholarship is to those who are forced to do it. Even with departmental reward systems designed to encourage a wide range of faculty activities, if graduate students are not selected, motivated, and educated to do other than narrow discovery-type research, it will not be done. To cultivate a diverse faculty we need to begin at the beginning.

A Reality Test: Is there a market? The success of encouraging graduate students to work in the variety of scholarship categories would depend on the willingness of doctorate-granting departments to award the PhD for alternative doctoral programs and the willingness of departments to hire graduates of these programs. In order to find out how open the doctoral programs (the "providers") and departments in non-doctorate-granting schools (the "consumers") are to the alternative scholarships, the deans of graduate studies (providers), academic deans (consumers) and chairs of departments of biology, history, mathematics and psychology (providers and consumers) at 251 U.S. colleges and universities were surveyed. Respondents were presented with four different graduate programs. Each program had the same coursework, focused on disciplinary knowledge, and leading to qualifying exams. What differed was the type of scholarship the student used for the dissertation: discovery, integration, application or pedagogy. Providers were asked whether they would award the PhD for each dissertation type and consumers were asked their likelihood of hiring graduates for the corresponding program. A comparison of providers and consumers in their willingness to grant a PhD or hire the candidate respectively is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Openness to Alternative Scholarship



Discovery For the traditional discovery orientation, there was almost universal agreement among providers that they would grant the doctorate. Among consumers, however, there was less agreement, with the numbers declining along the continuum from the Carnegie classification of Comprehensive 1 to Liberal Arts 2. Obviously, many departments have found hiring faculty with a strict research orientation not to be useful for their campuses.

Integration Providers were much less willing to award the PhD for integrative dissertations than they were for the discovery type. Barely over half of the Research 1 Universities said they would do so. On the other hand, consumers were very open to hiring PhDs with integration scholarship.

Application Providers were even less willing to grant the PhD for application-oriented dissertations. There was considerable interest among consumers, however, in hiring graduates with application scholarship.

Pedagogy The greatest difference between the providers and consumers was reported in the area of pedagogical scholarship. Approximately two-thirds of provider department chairs and deans said they would not award the PhD for dissertations done on the way knowledge in their field was taught or learned. Consumers, however, showed considerable interest in hiring PhDs with pedagogical scholarship. The information reported by consumers in this study clearly shows that there is a market for PhDs better prepared in their graduate programs to become college teachers. Combined with the problems already being reported by some sectors (and expected by all) in finding qualified college teachers, it also is evident that there are (and will be) positions waiting for PhDs whose dissertation research is concerned with how to transmit disciplinary knowledge to undergraduates. A pedagogically-based PhD program would need to fulfill (and be perceived as fulfilling) the same high scholarly requirements associated with traditional disciplinary PhDs. To do so will require broadening the concept of scholarship within the disciplines, making pedagogy an intellectual activity, which is, as Schulman says, "very tightly coupled to scholarship in the disciplines themselves" (1990).

The Two-way Street Graduate programs, the providers of new faculty, must recognize the need to develop and encourage a diverse range of scholarly talents. Hiring institutions, the consumers of new faculty, must communicate their need for high quality, well-rounded individuals representing the broad range of scholarship rather than a narrow concentration on the creation of new knowledge. The reports from the field indicate that what is wanted are future faculty with a broad (rather than specialized background) in their discipline, able to teach a wide variety of courses to undergraduates. Designing programs to educate the faculty of the future in both discipline and pedagogy is the next important intellectual task for the reflective practitioners among the graduate faculty. New visions of scholarship depend on finding models of graduate education which will attract and inspire our best and brightest undergraduates to pursue an academic career, bringing and developing their own ways of thinking.

References

Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Lawrenceville, NH: Princeton University Press.

Rice, R.E. (1990) Rethinking what it means to be a scholar. *Teaching Excellence: Toward the best in the academy*. 2, 1.

Shulman, L.S. (1990, October). The new American scholar: A teacher of substance. Paper presented at "The Scholarship of Teaching" Conference, Iona College, New Rochelle, NY.