



Educating Integrated Professionals: Theory and Practice on Preparation for the Professoriate

By C.L. Colbeck, O'Meara, K., & Austin, A. E., *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 113. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley. (2008).

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The focus of this volume, which is comprised of seven diverse chapters, is on preparing graduate students for an integrated approach to faculty work. The chapters emphasize the synergy between teaching, research, and service within an overall understanding of what it means to be an academic professional. The editors were careful to solicit chapters that emphasize both theory and practice and the importance of making connections across academic and professional roles and responsibilities. They emphasize the need for graduate education that produces “citizen-scholars” capable of creative problem-solving in international settings and comfortable adapting to a number of interrelated roles and responsibilities that include the “integration of teaching, research, community engagement, and administrative service,” p. 2. Traditional programs offered in academic silos provide graduate students only limited insights into “real” academic work. This book offers a powerful integrated approach to graduate student preparation primarily within the context of thoughtful case studies.

Carol Cobeck’s opening chapter presents an idealized vision of graduate students who are transformed into “integrated professionals” who can have an impact on all professions because of the variety of students they will mentor and teach. Her chapter—which emphasizes the book’s unifying thesis—unfolds through the lens of “identity” theory where pre-professionals can be encouraged to seek “shared identities” among their responsibilities related to teaching, research, and service.

In Chapter Two, Chris M. Golde offers an indictment of traditional graduate education preparation and recommends a shift to an emphasis on professional education through three apprenticeship models based on intellectual approaches (knowledge), an emphasis on skills, and a values-focused apprenticeship of identity and purpose. Her chapter reinforces the foundational concept of integration, the key thesis of this slim volume.

KerryAnn O’Meara’s highly theoretical chapter emphasizes embedding community engagement into professional education, emphasizing a four-phase socialization model. The theory, for me, was too complex to lead to concrete applications.

Chapter Four offers the first specific case study. Vicki L. Sweitzer discusses the first-semester experience of doctoral students in a business program at a top-ranked university. Two important “take-aways” for me emerge from this study. First of all, it is important to analyze the messages that students receive early-on, particularly during orientation. The four major messages identified in this business program—“publish or perish, research is king, must place in the top 50, and high expectations”—do not lead toward the ideal integrated approach. It is little wonder that students exposed to these messages view teaching as a necessary distraction that draws them away from research. The second take-away is the realization that multiple mentors are essential if students are to value and integrate the varied responsibilities they will face in academia.

Chapter Five by Emily M. Janke and Carol L. Colbeck, aptly titled in part “Lost in Translation,” focuses on a three-week mandatory preparation course for chemistry doctoral students. An emphasis on “tricks of the trade” and training rather than education can be detrimental if they suggest a “hidden curriculum”

that conveys that teaching skills are relatively mechanistic and can be learned in a short span of time,” p. 62. Closely related to this hidden curriculum is a focus on teaching as “doing,” as opposed to research which focuses on learning ways of knowing. The authors also found that the professional training was offered before students had an opportunity for observations and mentoring. Other factors—such as greater rewards for research within the department--tended to undermine a well-intentioned TA preparation program. I found the final recommendations helpful, particularly the need to ground new TAs in pedagogy and research on student learning.

The chapter (Six) by Austin, Connolly, and Colbeck that focuses on the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), perhaps because of its breadth--was for me the most useful. It identifies three conceptual pillars—“Teaching-as-Research (TAR), Learning Communities (LC), and Learning-through-Diversity (LTD), p. 71”—that shape the program that initially targeted STEM students at three major state research institutions but now includes the social and behavioral sciences. The multiple in-depth systematic programs, including the Delta program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, offer well-researched creatively conceived components. I appreciate the web resources and an assessment model for evaluating training programs, that I plan to adapt.

Eve Levin, the author of Chapter Seven, focuses on the history department at the University of Kansas, which undertook a reform of graduate student preparation despite innate tendencies toward conservatism and aversion to conflict. The “Progress Grid,” which “lays out what programmatic milestones a graduate student should meet year by year” (p. 91) is an innovation that might be useful to other programs.

In the editors’ concluding thoughts, the most heartening finding was that innovations and efforts to integrate graduate professional education depend more on concentrated, coordinated commitment rather than on money. With that thought, this book is worth a modest monetary investment.