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The Benefits of Practical Experience: Using Reflective Practitioner-Faculty in Graduate Programs

Kate Quinn, PhD, *Division of Doctoral Studies*

Abstract

There are substantial benefits of a pedagogical cycle in which reflective practitioner-faculty use real-world application of skills to enhance adult student learning. By professionally engaging in the fields in which they teach, practitioner-faculty ensure that the skills and theories taught to students are current. Likewise, through professional projects, practitioner-faculty are exposed to real-world situations where clients require up-to-date professional services, similar to the work environments of many students. This prepares practitioner-faculty to assist students in finding

real-world applications for what they are learning in class. As students actively engage with the new materials and practice skills, they raise challenging, real-world questions as members of a community of practice. These questions result in a critical reflection process among practitioner-faculty, which helps keep faculty current in their fields. Connections are made to both the academic model and the learning goals of one institution of higher learning.

The Nature of Professional Education

There are significant benefits of a pedagogical cycle in which reflective practitioner-faculty use real-world application of skills to enhance adult student learning. In this cycle, practitioner-faculty bring current professional knowledge to their teaching. They use this knowledge in connecting course work and skill development to the professional lives of adult students to enhance their engagement and therefore their authentic learning. By engaging in this manner adult students who have professional lives, reflective practitioner-faculty foster a synergistic cycle that further enhances both teaching and learning. Connections between the literature, personal reflections from one practitioner-faculty member, and both the academic model and institutional learning goals support the synergistic cycle proposed in the model.

The Reflective Practitioner model is derived from the work of various scholars who have connected the need for real-world experience to effectiveness in teaching and learning, particularly in professional fields (Branch, 2010; Chan, 2010; Eraut, 1985; Olson & Clark, 2009; Rømer, 2003; Schön, 1983, 1987). It connects the goals and nature of professional education, best practices in professional education, and the role played by reflective practitioner-faculty in providing effective professional education.

The role of professional education programs is to prepare students to be effective professionals in their various fields, meaning that students must be capable of reflecting on their experiences and of continuous learning and improvement (Chan, 2010). Preparation for success in professional careers means learning the professional knowledge of the field, including both the technical and practical knowledge. Technical knowledge is “capable of written codification,” whereas

practical knowledge is uncodifiable and “is expressed only in practice and learned only through experience with practice” (Eraut 1985, p. 119). Practical, or “tacit,” knowledge is less certain and more complex, typically, than is the codifiable technical knowledge (Chan, 2010; Eraut, 1985; Schön, 1987). In professional education, learning codified skill sets only meets some of the needs of the professional preparation; practical experiences and knowledge are also required (Branch, 2010; Chan, 2010; Eraut, 1985; Maudsley & Strivens, 2000; Rømer, 2003; Schön, 1983, 1987). Maudsley and Strivens (2000) note that “professional knowledge must ultimately reflect client-focused outcomes” to adequately prepare professionals to be competitive in their fields (p. 538).

Professional knowledge comprises four different types of knowledge within the technical-practical dichotomy: (a) propositional (“knowing that”) knowledge; (b) process (“knowing how”) knowledge; (c) personal knowledge, especially pre-propositional impressions; and, (d) moral principles or knowledge (Maudsley & Strivens, 2000). Aspects that are capable of being catalogued and explained through writing are the technical aspects and the practical aspects are the “messier” aspects such as the “art” inherent in many professional processes (Maudsley & Strivens, 2000). For example, moral principles and knowledge might comprise the technical aspects of Internal Review Board (IRB) regulations and forms, as well as the practical aspect of the nuance of language in creating effective protocols that protect human subjects.

Eraut (1985) draws on the typology of Broudy, Smith, and Burnett (1964) for the four stages of professional knowledge acquisition: (a) replication, (b) application, (c) interpretation, and (d) association. Replication is simply replicating task performance or skill application. Application is being able to correctly apply skills or knowledge to new situations. Interpretation is correctly understanding situations through applied theoretical knowledge and applying appropriate skills, potentially in novel ways, to meet those situations. Eraut (1985) comments that “the interpretive use of knowledge also plays some part in that mysterious quality we call ‘professional judgment’” and notes that it is different than mere understanding or application (p. 125). Associative knowledge use typically represents the conveyance of complex theories and concepts through metaphors and images in a clear and compelling manner (Eraut, 1985). At this level of knowledge acquisition, novice professionals are capable of not only understanding

but also distilling complex concepts and information into easy-to-understand analogies or visuals for other professionals or clients.

Best Practices in Professional Education

Chan (2010) provides an overview of the professional education literature, which covers both “the nature of professional knowledge and its pedagogies,” noting the consensus that “practical experiences are indispensable and experiential teaching and learning are the best ways for providing students with professional expertise” (p. 36). Five aspects have been put forth as necessary for experiential learning to take place. Experiential learning “(a) has experience as its foundation and stimulus, (b) involves learners actively constructing their experiences, (c) is a holistic process, (d) is socially and culturally constructed, and (e) is influenced by the socio-emotional context” (Boud et al., 1993, as cited in Maudsley and Strivens, 2000, p. 539). The cycle of experiential learning includes concrete experience; reflective observations on the experience; abstract conceptualization; active experimentation based on the experiences, reflection, and conceptualization; and, concrete experience as a result of the experimentation (Kolb, 1984, as cited in Maudsley and Strivens, 2000). This process is very similar to that of action research, which “cycles creative problem solving, implementation of practice, and reflective interpretation of that practice” (Maudsley and Strivens, 2000, p. 539). Eraut (1985) argues that the “quality of the initial professional education depends to a considerable degree on the quality of practice; and that in turn is influenced by the continuing education of the practitioners” (p. 131). This speaks to both formal (academic) and on-the-job learning on the part of practitioner-faculty members who teach in professional education programs. By having professional education faculty members as current practitioners in their fields, the quality of the opportunities for practical experiences is enhanced.

In addition to practical experience, interpretive or critical reflection is needed in “situations where experience is initially apprehended at the level of impression, thus requiring a further period of reflective thinking before it is either assimilated into existing schemes or experiences, or induces those schemes to change in order to accommodate it” (Eraut, 1992, as cited in Maudsley and Strivens, 2000, p. 539). Schön (1983, 1987) posited that professionals learn best through reflective practice, namely reflection-in-action

and reflection-on-action. Building on this work, many scholars recommend reflective practice in professional education to enhance authentic learning (Branch, 2010; Pack, 2011; Rømer, 2003; Saltiel, 2007). Schön (1983) recommended a reflective practical experience (i.e., practicum) to best prepare professional students for their chosen careers. Chan (2010) defined practicums as “a designed form of practice for the purpose of teaching and learning” (p. 42).

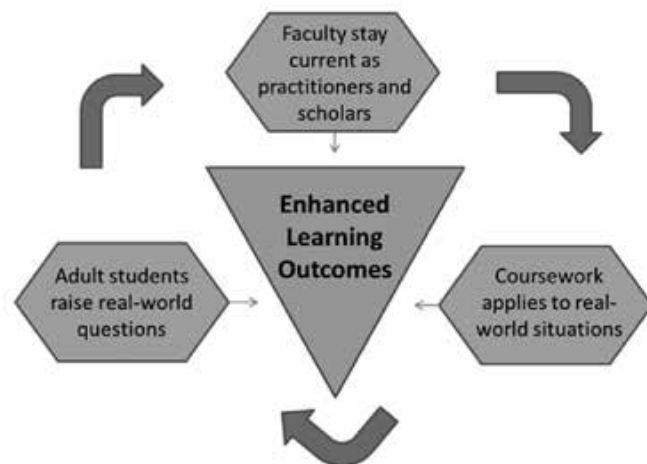
Similar to practicum opportunities, proponents of situated learning claim that professionals best learn how to engage in their chosen practice by “solving problems in context” and working closely with experienced practitioners (Maudsley and Strivens, 2000, p. 537). In this way, “novices learn what to observe, what interpretations to link to observations, and what words and actions to use when conveying these both to clients and colleagues” (Maudsley and Strivens, 2000, p. 537). As Maudsley and Strivens (2000) note, this is similar to learning in “communities of practice.” Communities of practice have been recommended as best practices for various doctoral programs designed to prepare students for membership in professional communities, whether academic or professional (Leshem, 2007; Wenger & McDermott, 2002; Wenger, 1998a, 1998b). Graduate instruction through communities of practice is considered a “signature pedagogy” (Golde, 2007; Shulman, 2005), which are “the characteristic forms of teaching and learning . . . that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions” (Shulman, 2005, p. 52). This course structure actively engages students in their own learning, as they learn from the faculty member and each other, and is supported in the literature on professional education and leadership development (e.g., Conger & Toegel, 2003; Mumford & Manley, 2003; Olson & Clark, 2009). Maudsley and Strivens (2000) imply that situated learning happens only in in-service or apprenticeship-style learning opportunities and not in higher education classrooms, but this reflects back to the identified disconnect between higher education and the needs of professional communities (Eraut, 1985). In institutions where active practitioner-faculty help design curricula and structure learning opportunities, situated learning is possible.

Finally, Chan (2010) notes that professional knowledge is best transferred from other professionals to novice professionals through individual coaching and the vicarious experiences from the instructor. These enable students to reflect on experiences, whether first- or secondhand, and to think through ways to experiment for improved outcomes, leading to new experiences and further reflection.

The Benefits of Utilizing Reflective Practitioner-Faculty

Teaching, application, and acquisition of graduate-level research design skills all benefit from utilizing reflective practitioner-faculty, and these benefits should apply to any level of professional education that serves working adult students (Fig. 1). At the top of the model, reflective practitioner-faculty stay current for their teaching and professional practice. These teaching faculty are primarily employed as professionals in their fields and secondarily as faculty. Their professional work keeps them up-to-date in the issues and events of the field in which they teach. As practitioners current in their fields, these faculty are well positioned to create or refine course work and learning experiences that draw from real-world situations, similar to the work lives of their students (second component of the model). This, in turn, encourages and creates the space where adult students, who are also working professionals, raise real-world questions of the course material and learning experiences back to the class and the instructor (third component of model), leading to reflection and growth for the instructor and the students. That loops back to supporting reflective practitioner-faculty in remaining current in both their professional practice and their teaching. Each step in this triad supports student learning, shown in the middle. All aspects are described in detail below the figure, with connections to the supporting literature.

Fig. 1. *Model of the Benefits of Utilizing Reflective Practitioner-Faculty*



The first component of the model is a key benefit of using active practitioners as teaching faculty in professional education programs: they are current in their fields. Practitioner-faculty are teaching faculty who are employed full- or part-time as professionals, or are retired from professional practice, and who teach part-time in their field (Chan, 2010; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Leslie & Gappa, 1995; Leslie & Walke, 2001; Tuckman, 1978).

Part-time faculty in higher education have received a fair amount of attention in the literature, including the changes in the demographics and use of part-time faculty (e.g., American Association of University Professors, 1980; Balch, 1999; Berberet & McMillin, 2002; Charfauros & Tierney, 1999; Conley & Leslie, 2002; German, 1996; Leslie & Gappa, 1994) and the satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) of part-time faculty (Antony & Valadez, 2002; Fulton, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Unger, 2000). While some of this literature has either bemoaned the decline of tenure-track positions (Cooper, 2009; Finkin, 2000; Leatherman, 1997; Plater, 2008) or warned of the potential decrease in teaching quality and/or student learning outcomes resulting from utilizing part-time instructors (Balch, 1999), other scholars have detailed benefits of utilizing practitioner-faculty—particularly in professional fields (Chan, 2010; Fulton, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Leslie & Gappa, 1995). At institutions such as CityU where the teaching model relies on practitioner-faculty, part-time instructors create less of a burden on the time allocation of full-time faculty, as has been found in settings with a bifurcated faculty of full-time tenure-line faculty and part-time adjuncts (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004).

Active practitioner-faculty must possess the four types of professional knowledge put forth by Maudsley and Strivens (2000) (i.e., propositional, process, firsthand impressions, and moral/ethical) to be competitive in their professional practice. As part-time teaching faculty, they are excellently situated to transfer this technical and practical professional knowledge to their students (Eraut, 1985; Rømer, 2003; Schön, 1987). Further, the wealth of knowledge these active practitioners bring about their professions into their teaching permits them to scaffold and assess the acquisition of this knowledge base. Practitioner-faculty are aware of the current events, issues, and complexities of their field (Chan, 2010), allowing them to keep the discussions and activities relevant. This awareness also positions practitioner-faculty members to facilitate productive reflection processes among their students as they gain professional experiences (Chan, 2010; Kennedy, 1987).

Chan (2010) found that professional students perceived their part-time teachers to be “more practical and in-tune with the trends and market” than were their full-time teachers (p. 43). Full-time faculty, even with active research agendas, face the challenge of remaining current in their professional fields and higher education, in general, and have been found to lack “appropriate structures for knowledge exchange between higher education and the professions” (Eraut, 1985, p. 117). These factors combine to create a disconnect between what many institutions of higher education are teaching and the needs of the professional communities for which they are preparing students (Chan, 2010; Eraut, 1985). Utilizing practitioner-faculty who are able to incorporate relevant experiences and facilitate the reflection process on these experiences helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Chan, 2010; Eraut, 1985; Maudsley & Strivens, 2000). Further, using practitioner-faculty facilitates the exchange of information between institution and professional community and helps to ensure that curricula are up-to-date and meet the changing needs of the professions (Eraut, 1985).

Additionally, practitioner-faculty are excellent coaches and mentors to their students, supporting them as they strive to attain the professional development necessary to further their careers (Chan, 2010). Practitioner-faculty typically have access to other professionals in their community of practice, who are valuable resources for students on their way to a higher rung of the ladder in the community themselves (Chan, 2010). In these ways, practitioner-faculty facilitate the transition into the professional community of practice for their students by being active members of the communities themselves (Chan, 2010).

The second component of the model connects practitioner-faculty expertise and awareness of the state of their field to the ability to structure learning experiences around real-world application of the skills and information being taught. As noted above, key elements of professional education revolve around active and engaged learning models that provide opportunities for students to learn from the experiences of their faculty while gaining new experiences themselves through controlled and supervised opportunities (Chan, 2010; Eraut, 1985; Rømer, 2003; Schön, 1983, 1987). Because of their connections to their professional communities, practitioner-faculty are able to translate current events and issues into relevant activities for their students. Additionally, practitioner-faculty are adept at creating learning opportunities based on

the work lives and professional interests of their students, ensuring that course work is relevant. Specifically, practitioner-faculty are prepared to work with students to ensure that experiences and learning opportunities are co-created with the student and align with the personal and professional needs of each student.

Practitioner-faculty are not only able to design effective learning opportunities, but they are excellently situated to facilitate and monitor the learning of their students. Having gone through the stages of professional knowledge acquisition themselves, practitioner-faculty are prepared to work with students as they replicate what they are learning, apply what they are learning to new situations, interpret situations and apply knowledge/skills in innovative ways, and communicate concepts with others through imagery and other easily comprehensible styles. In the terms of experiential learning, practitioner-faculty are positioned to structure concrete relevant experiences for students, facilitate the reflective observations about the experiences by the students, work with students so that they productively conceptualize new and feasible approaches, and mentor the students as they actively experiment with the selected new approach and reflect on the process and outcomes.

Part-time teaching faculty who are practitioners in their fields can “easily relate theory to their practice” and are positioned to connect students to “cutting edge ideas and practice” (Chan, 2010, p. 39). Whether problem-based learning, experiential learning, or action research, connecting course work and application to the kinds of experiences students face in their work lives facilitates their active role in acquiring new skills and knowledge and helps close the gap between theory and practice, learning and doing (Billett, 1996; Chan, 2010; Conger & Toegel, 2003; Maudsley & Strivens, 2000).

Experience working with clients in various settings is often the best preparation for helping students, who have varied professional interests, find ways to apply what they are learning to their work environments. In cases where students are interested in changing fields, active professional practice enables practitioner-faculty to connect students with new opportunities to practice their skills beyond their current employment. As members of professional associations and networks, practitioner-faculty learn of new developments in the field and are able to bring these into classes. Additionally, in their professional roles, practitioner-faculty train new staff members in how to perform tasks and work with clients in the field. These experiences

directly translate to work with students as practitioner-faculty find or create learning opportunities for them to practice new skills or concepts.

The third component of the model is the least covered in the literature: it is the synergistic effect of adult professionals raising real-world questions of their course work. As students process their course materials and engage in activities that have been intentionally structured to mirror real-world scenarios, they begin to pose thoughtful and engaging questions that frequently require faculty to be critically reflective on their professional activities in order to make any implicit or tacit practical knowledge explicit (Eraut, 1985). Reflection on the part of faculty significantly enhances teaching and learning (Hubball, Collins, & Pratt, 2005; Robinson, Anderson-Harper, & Kochan, 2001). Further, when faculty model for students the reflective process, it facilitates student reflection and enhances the transfer of professional knowledge (Eraut, 1985). Critical reflection is crucial to lifelong learning and continuous professional development (Eraut, 1985). Student questions may also lead to exploration or research on the part of the faculty member to determine an appropriate answer, potentially drawing on additional colleagues or resources. Finally, engaging with students in this manner helps faculty to communicate effectively what it is they do as practitioners, enhancing the ability to explain processes, procedures, and technical jargon of the field and, therefore, enhancing both teaching effectiveness and professional practice.

Performance in the professional role is enhanced by teaching activities. As professionals themselves, students raise very challenging and relevant questions of the professional knowledge being taught, particularly at the intersection of technical knowledge and practical application. In order to respond to these questions, faculty must reflect critically on the conceptual material and their practical experiences and be able to explicitly describe their findings. This also requires faculty to demonstrate competence in the highest stage of professional knowledge acquisition—the associative stage. Frequently, faculty must offer an easier-to-understand version of a concept to students or clients and practicing with one group benefits the ability to work with the other. Additionally, work with clients and with students forces practitioner-faculty to stay at the forefront of their field and on top of current events and circumstances. In these ways, roles as practitioner and faculty member reinforce one another.

Applying the Model

Connecting the prior concepts and discussion to the academic model and learning goals of an institution of higher education further demonstrates how utilizing practitioner-faculty benefits professional education. An example of one such institution practicing this model is City University of Seattle.

The City University of Seattle academic model has five components that support the learning goals across all courses and programs. The academic model is designed to ensure that learning experiences align with the mission, vision, and values of the university at the course and program levels (City University of Seattle, 2010). The components of the academic model are (a) a focus on student learning, (b) the use of professional practitioner-faculty, (c) ensuring curricular relevance to the workplace, (d) service to students, and (e) accessibility and responsiveness.

A Focus on Student Learning

City University of Seattle learning experiences are designed to support clearly articulated outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. Educational experiences are carefully designed by faculty to encourage self-directed learning within an appropriately defined structure of expectations. With the focus on applying theory to practical experience, learning activities form explicit links among the crucial abilities of an educated professional: critical thinking, self-exploration, and ethical practice. Multiple paths to demonstrating competency are available to learners when appropriate. Students are actively encouraged to define and take responsibility for their own contributions to the learning process, with the understanding that their engagement is critical for substantive learning to take place.

—CityU website

Reflective practitioner-faculty are well positioned to meet the learning needs of adult professionals continuing their educations. As discussed above, we are active in our professional arenas and able to quickly connect theory with practical experience. We have a solid, current understanding of the professional knowledge base, both technical and practical, that our students need to acquire. Enhanced

by university supports for effective pedagogy, our understanding of our fields prepares us to recognize what our students already know, what they still need to acquire, and the best strategies to help them get there. We are well prepared to work with our students to ensure that they are thinking critically about how the course work and new skills or knowledge connect to their professional lives, how they are developing personally and professionally, and that they understand and utilize ethical practices.

Reflective Practitioner-Faculty

City University of Seattle faculty are highly regarded practitioners who bring real-life experience to the learning environment. They consider students to be collaborative partners in the creation of learning opportunities. To support practitioner-faculty in their teaching roles, the institution provides orientation, training, mentoring, and coaching, all designed to foster a respectful and empowering learning environment. Faculty are rewarded for quality teaching and encouraged to continue their development as facilitators of learning.

—CityU website

In the traditional academic world, academic credentials tend to be valued higher than professional expertise or experience. In other words, my PhD makes me competitive for more positions in higher education than are open to my colleagues with more years of practical experience who hold only a master's degree. Combined with studies of part-time faculty that show negative findings related to student outcomes when compared to full-time faculty, part-time practitioner-faculty can be a hard sell to the accrediting bodies that approve professional education programs. I think this is an outdated prejudice that needs to be explored and put to rest. My two years as a professional evaluator prepared me better to teach research design than my doctoral training did. My on-the-job training as a professional working with clients—whether school districts, universities, or the U.S. Department of Education—gave me the practical experiences needed to understand how the theories I learned as a graduate student play out in the real world. My ability to transfer this knowledge to my students does not come from my academic credential; it comes from my status as a

practitioner. Further, my doctoral program did not prepare me to teach, so I needed just as much support from CityU for effective teaching as did my colleagues without PhDs. Finally, incorporating practitioner-faculty into the core of professional education programs ensures that there is no disconnect between academic and professional communities.

Relevance to the Workplace

A City University of Seattle education is founded on carefully selected goals that are intended to provide graduates with up-to-date knowledge and practical skills required in the workplace, as well as a framework for continued development. Institution-wide learning goals that emphasize personal and professional growth are embedded in all programs offered at the university. The institution's current goals include professional competence and technical expertise, communication and interpersonal skills, critical thinking, ethical practice and community involvement, development of a diverse and global perspective, and lifelong learning. The overarching goals of a City University of Seattle education enhance the professional skills and knowledge of individuals who in turn add value to their organizations.

—CityU website

Reflective practitioner-faculty, who are actively involved in the same professional arenas that our students are coming from or going to, are the best positioned faculty members to keep the course work relevant to the workplace. Our knowledge and practical skills have to be up-to-date or we would not survive as practitioners, and we are excellently situated to share our technical and practical professional knowledge with our students. A common criticism of many academic programs is that curricular change is slow and that programs may be out of touch with the current trends in the market or professional communities. Having practitioner-faculty fully integrated into professional education programs ensures that the courses are flexible enough to quickly meet new professional needs, while including the fundamental skills and knowledge base of the profession.

Service to Students

City University of Seattle strives to provide a respectful atmosphere in which all students are valued for their contribution and individual needs are honored. A diverse and international student body requires a variety of services to support the learning endeavor. The university strives to be sensitive to students and their needs, to respond in a timely and professional manner to student questions or concerns, and to uphold high standards. —CityU website

Practitioner-faculty, like their full-time academic counterparts, work with diverse clients, colleagues, and students. Practical experience working in diverse teams where members bring different skill sets, expertise, and styles of working transfers well to the professional education classroom. Increasingly, professional and academic collaborations cross national lines, preparing practitioner-faculty not only to recognize and meet different student needs but also to incorporate different skill sets and expertise of the students into the classroom. Similar to full-time faculty, who could be considered professional academics, practitioner-faculty bring a high level of professionalism to their interactions with students.

Accessibility and Responsiveness

The university is committed to making high-quality learning opportunities as accessible and responsive to the needs of our diverse student population as possible. This includes maintaining affordability, removing unnecessary barriers to entry, providing support for students with differing levels of educational background and preparation, and offering a variety of class schedules and modes of delivery. —CityU website

Utilizing practitioner-faculty is central to keeping programs accessible and responsive to student needs. CityU attracts a diverse student body across its programs internationally, but a common element is the desire to enhance marketability and career-readiness. As noted previously, practitioner-faculty are well positioned to recognize the

knowledge and skills already possessed by students, as well as their learning needs. Combined with entrance requirements and processes designed to assist students, rather than act as gate-keepers barring entrance to college, practitioner-faculty offering online courses asynchronously provide an exceptionally flexible opportunity for adult working professionals to return to higher education.

Alignment with Learning Goals

In addition to the academic model, many institutions of higher education have specified learning goals or outcomes that structure program and course development and implementation. In this way, curricular development and delivery are aligned to maximize the likelihood that students achieve the desired outcomes. To further demonstrate how well the reflective practitioner model supports effective teaching and learning, I have mapped the learning goals of the City University of Seattle.

Graduates Exhibit Professional Competency and a Sense of Professional Identity

Our graduates bring to the workplace the knowledge and skills intrinsic to success in their professions. They understand the basic values and mission of the fields in which they are working. They are able to use technology to facilitate their work. They have an understanding of basic technical concepts and are able to demonstrate understanding through practical application. —CityU website

Practitioner-faculty are best prepared to transfer to students, and assess the acquisition of, the professional knowledge and skills students need to be successful in their target professions. As practitioners themselves, these faculty understand what it takes to be competitive and facilitate the transition for students into the professional community. Practitioner-faculty are well situated to craft learning activities that provide students with opportunities to demonstrate competency through practical application.

Graduates Have Strong Communication and Interpersonal Skills

City University of Seattle graduates are able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. They are able to interact and work with others in a collaborative manner as well as to negotiate difficult interpersonal situations to bring about solutions to problems that benefit all involved. —CityU website

Students learn the terms and communication styles of the profession from their practitioner-faculty members and practice conveying concepts through interactive lessons, preparing them to collaborate professionally in their fields. Having professional education programs structured such that students are learning as members of a community of practice, students enhance their interpersonal skills through a critical peer review process in which they give and receive feedback from their classmates and the practitioner-faculty. Practitioner-faculty members, as active members of the professional community, are positioned to model professional communication and interactions.

Graduates Demonstrate Critical Thinking and Information Literacy

City University of Seattle graduates are able to think critically and creatively, and to reflect upon their own work and the larger context in which it takes place. They are able to find, access, evaluate, and use information in order to solve problems. They consider the complex implications of actions they take and decisions they make. —CityU website

As members of the professional community of practice, practitioner-faculty structure learning activities to provide students with experience thinking critically and creatively about how to apply knowledge and skills to new problems in the field. Further, practitioner-faculty introduce students to the professional resources and information to solve problems in the context of the professional field. As active practitioners, these faculty

are also capable of assessing the performance of students and encouraging additional growth or development as needed.

Graduates Demonstrate a Strong Commitment to Ethical Practice and Service in Their Professions and Communities

City University of Seattle graduates take responsibility for their own actions and exhibit high standards of conduct in their professional lives. They are aware of the ethical expectations of their profession and hold themselves accountable to those standards. City University of Seattle graduates are also active contributors to their professional communities and associations. They are informed and socially responsible citizens of their communities, as well as of the world. —CityU website

As noted above, moral practice and/or ethical knowledge are considered one of the four types of professional knowledge. As active professionals, practitioner-faculty possess this knowledge, apply it in their practice, and are ready to design learning activities through which students practice and demonstrate their acquisition of this knowledge. Further, as students move through the programs as members of a learning community, they further prepare themselves under the guidance of practitioner-faculty to be contributing members of professional communities of practice.

Graduates Demonstrate Diverse and Global Perspectives

City University of Seattle graduates embrace the opportunity to work collaboratively with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, and to learn from the beliefs, values, and cultures of others. They realize that varied viewpoints bring strength and richness to the workplace. City University of Seattle graduates demonstrate an awareness of the interrelation of diverse components of a project or situation. —CityU website

Professional collaborations are increasingly international in nature, and with the international campuses of CityU, practitioner-faculty are well connected professionally and through CityU's resources to expose students to diverse perspectives. Further, CityU's practitioner-faculty establish learning opportunities through which students demonstrate broadened perspectives and awareness of different cultural values and beliefs. Related to broadened cultural understanding is the reflection process discussed previously; practitioner-faculty are able to guide students in reflective processes through which they can assess their own perspectives and attitudes as they are exposed to differing viewpoints.

Graduates Are Lifelong Learners

In a world where knowledge and skills must be constantly updated, City University of Seattle graduates are self-directed and information-literate in seeking out ways to continue their learning throughout their lifetimes. —CityU website

The experiential learning and reflection process at the heart of acquiring professional knowledge and skills is itself part of a continuous learning cycle. In other words, the reflective nature of effective professional education fosters the continuous learning process, and practitioner-faculty help students develop these habits. Additionally, while students, they learn from practitioner-faculty members various sources of information and resources to facilitate self-guided learning. In this way, practitioner-faculty set students on the path to be effective lifelong learners and professionals.

Conclusion

The literature on best practices in professional education supports the utilization of practitioner-faculty. Practitioner-faculty possess the technical and practical professional knowledge of the field, as well as the practical experience and professional networks, to structure effective learning opportunities for students. At institutions such as City University of Seattle where offering continuing education to adult students is a priority, the practitioner-faculty model best serves students. As discussed here,

the reflective practitioner-faculty model represents a synergistic cycle that begins with practitioner-faculty utilizing their professional experience, knowledge, and networks to connect course work to real-world application. Students who are also adult working professionals are then able to pose challenging questions about the theories and application. In response, practitioner-faculty must be reflective and explicit about their application of theory in practice. This process helps to enhance the practitioner-faculty member's ability to work effectively with clients by keeping them current in their fields and capable of effectively communicating with both clients and students.

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