
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF PSYCHOLOGISTS: TRANSATLANTIC DIFFERENCES AND TRAINING IN CYPRUS.

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Professional Psychology:

A unified discipline?

- Diversity of psychology as a discipline
- Multiple specialties – common goals?
- Multiple career paths and employment settings
- Lack of a shared view across specialties and across world regions- What is psychology?
- Training of professional psychologists varies widely i.t.o. content, duration, and method across geographical regions.
 1. Historical factors/tradition
 2. Philosophical differences
 3. Developmental issues

Historical differences in Psychology

North America <i>(consistency)</i>	Europe <i>(variability)</i>
Clearly established and independent field of study	Lacks a clear and independent identity
Departments of Psychology	Departments of Psychology/ philosophy / or education
Social Science	Science or Philosophy?

Philosophical differences in the education of psychologists

North America	Europe
Goals of undergraduate education - Thinking skills/Liberal Arts/Broader education	Knowledge In-depth study
Emphasis on empirically validated practice and scientifically informed training	More emphasis on philosophical heritage science/empiricism)
Scientist-Practitioner model Science-practice tension decreased Doctoral level training	Practitioner/Pragmatic model Continued tension between academic and professional psychology (science vs practice) Masters level training
Specialization “General practitioner” not accepted	Relative acceptance of general practitioner (5 year programs)

Differences in the developmental stages of the profession

North America	Europe
Practice of psychology- legally regulated and protected for many decades	legally unregulated or poorly regulated in various member states. No uniform standards (recent efforts – EuroPsy)
Training of psychologists- clear and uniform training standards issued through the National Professional Associations	No uniform training standards for professional psychologists. Recent efforts (EuroPsy) to form uniform guidelines for training and practice
Clinical Training of psychologists- During university education	During or after completion of university education

The experience of Cyprus

- A case example of the challenges involved in training professional psychologists in Europe
- Is the context ready for us to train professional psychologists?
- The role of the university in guiding the development of the profession
- University of Cyprus
 - Department of Psychology

DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR TRAINING PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS: 6 DECADES AFTER THE BOULDER MODEL

- Need to “rediscover the wheel” in the European reality
 - In Cyprus, need to establish it's own training model
 - Bridging the transatlantic differences
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Leap of faith: “MA in School Psychology”

- 2004
 - Department of Education
 - More focused professional specialty
 - Collaboration with Ministry of Education
 - Need for School Psychologists
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The School Psychology MA at the University of Cyprus: The Challenge...

- To train qualified School Psychologists who:
 - ❑ Can respond to the needs of the market
 - ❑ Can work both in the public and private sector
 - ❑ Will practice ethically and legally
 - ❑ Will base practice on scientific knowledge
 - ❑ Will be able to deal with a wide range of presenting problems while staying within the limits of own competence
 - ❑ Will be competitive to enter Ph.D. programs if desired

The context....

- Legal standards that were never clearly enforced
- Fields of practice not clearly defined
- The market saturated with low qualified BA and 1-year MA graduates – may lead to conflicts of interest
- No prior local experience in training professional psychologists.
- Absence of corresponding model from other professions (no medical school/no understanding of clinical responsibilities)
- Few qualified supervisors/supervisors with minimal credentials
- No preestablished practicum sites/resistance to accepting trainees.
- No legal framework for training: liability, duties, payment, etc.

The difficulties...

...Resources, Resources, Resources...

■ Demanding Training

- ❑ (Practicum, Assessment, Intervention): Students need individual attention – more faculty numbers.
- ❑ Can become competitive with other Department priorities
- ❑ Supervisors should be licensed/well-trained
- ❑ May need professional insurance

■ Changing Mentalities

- ❑ Practitioner and scientist training considered competitive and incompatible
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...Difficulties

- Demands on faculty time, not considered for purposes of evaluation
- Who will supervise student research?
- Too much to cover in too little time...Masters, or Doctoral level?
- Collaboration with external partners: May have competing priorities
- Explaining the program to the University & society
- How many students to take: too many or too few?
- Resisting external pressures to change legal context.

Bases upon which the training program was structured

- Across the Atlantic
 - Boulder and Vail training models
 - EuroPsy
 - MAPS-C
 - Needs and reservations of local partners
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...structure

- Course work to cover both scientific basis of psychology and applied skills in assessment, intervention, program development and evaluation and consultation
- 3 revisions in 4 years! Program is “work in progress”

Structure of the resulting program

- 2-year model: not enough time for independent practice
 - 3-year model:
 - 2 years of course work full time
 - 1 semester of part-time practicum
 - 1 year full time internship.
 - Adequate research experience: MA thesis encouraged but not required.
 - Program fixed to reduce resources required
 - Final professional proficiency exam (board of examiners – external member)
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The Future

- Need to stabilize collaborations through formal agreements
- Need to lobby for more resources to cover regular needs
- Prestige gained through the program has facilitated ability to make demands
- The context is changing by the absorption of graduates in work market
- Qualified graduates may function as potential future instructors or supervisors
- Potential to use experience gained to structure new programs (e.g. Clinical?)

Ongoing challenges and lessons learned.....

- True mobility??
 - Professional training of psychologists within Europe should not be the isolated effort of each member state.
 - Urgent need for European uniform guidelines for
 - legal standards of psychological practice
 - curriculum and supervised training in professional psychology
 - creation and accreditation of training facilities
 - Goals: quality control of the training, collective use of resources, exchange opportunities for clinical training and idea within Europe and across the Atlantic.
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Conclusion.....

- Although the cultural, historical, and educational contexts in the European region differ from those in North America, there is much room for the exchange of ideas and training opportunities, and for learning from lessons of the past.

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