ATTAINING THE APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PROFESSION OF THE FUTURE BY CHALLENGING THE "DOMINANT LOGICS" OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: This article defines some aspects of the "dominant logic" of higher education, particularly as applied to the field of child and youth work. It offers concepts to reframe the traditional components of college and university education in order to reduce the limiting effects of the "dominant logic," thus contributing to the development of a viable and coherent higher education system, specifically for child and youth work.

In the last three decades the development and advancement of the field of child and youth work has been supported by college and university-based (higher education) preparation programs. Academic units have been established and struggled for legitimacy and viability. In the face of rapid change it would seem crucial now for the higher education to examine itself and to identify both barriers to future growth, the productive pathways such growth might take, and what changes might be made to best enable higher education in the field to not only be sustained, but to grow in prominence and effectiveness. The task becomes even more compelling when we recognize that there is no well established human service profession that is not represented by an academic unit in colleges and universities.

Where people work in a societally devalued area (e.g., with children) whether directly, in higher education, or in any number of related roles, there is a tendency for them to assume a "victim" mentality that results in a passive mindset that tends to restrain the initiative and proaction needed to see the need for change and to provide what is indicated to both make and respond to it. This mentality is very akin to a "dominant logic." A "dominant logic" is an entrenched value system that is so pervasive that those who hold it aren't really conscious of its influence and that serves as a barrier to change (Begun & White, 1995). Begun and White's examination of the "dominant logic" of nursing, a "caring" profession similar in some ways to child and youth work, showed very specifically the limiting effects of the "dominant logic" that has heretofore served to define and organize it. On the premise that the overall goal of higher education is to provide a coherent system of preparation that reflects a defined area of needed practice and provides personnel whose efforts result in positive client outcomes it could be useful, then, to

examine the "dominant logic" of higher education that might be altered to increase the probability of its attainment.

Thus, this article will:

Define some aspects of the "dominant logic" of higher education particularly as they apply to the field of child and youth work;

Offer concepts that can serve to reframe or reconceptualize the traditional components of higher education so as to reduce the limiting effects of the "dominant logics."

Apply the following concepts to the standard components of higher education:

- Relationships with external processes (i.e., social and service system trends; other academic units)
- Organizational and planning function of the administrative and academic unit
- Mission of academic institutions (research, service, teaching)
- Historical, current and emergent scope of the field
- Relationships with internal institutional entities (other disciplines and professions)
- Curriculum and para-curriculum
- Delivery
- Personnel (faculty and staff)
- Students

CHALLENGING THE "DOMINANT LOGIC" OF HIGHER EDUCATION

There are a number of "dominant logics" that intersect both perceptions of the child and youth care itself, and those of higher education. In general these pertain to notions about the significance of "care work" as a professional discipline work and one that does not need to be conveyed through academic programs and to how higher education should address—or not—the field.

These "dominant logics" include:

- That applied fields and human services are not prestigious and can be professions without a "higher education" component situated in colleges and universities
- That the child and youth care field is not academically legitimate or credible; that it is not a profession justifying an academic unit and that there is not an identifiable knowledge, research, or practice base for it
- That theory and practice are dichotomous concepts, that "classroom" and "field" can integrate without a structure to encourage it

- That there is primarily one acceptable model of research (i.e., empirical data gathering and experimental analysis) acceptable for credibility and for faculty senior level appointments
- That community service, among the three traditional missions of academic institutions, is less valued than the research and teaching missions
- That the proper focus of faculty is on one highly defined and specific area of study; that the interests and activities of faculty do not need to entrain into, or relate to, an overarching purpose of the program
- That management concepts, such as planning and marketing have no place in applications to higher education, and certainly not to child and youth work in higher education
- That academic units are *unilateral* victims of unsympathetic administrations
- That simply "teaching" leads to changed practice in the real setting
- That the current situation is acceptable and that *continued* improvement is to be disdained
- That there should not be sufficient or properly prepared support staff to handle appropriate tasks, a situation which subtly contributes to ineffectiveness and disorganization.

CONCEPTS THAT ENCOURAGE
TRANSFORMATION OF THE DOMINANT LOGIC

Given the above unproductive "dominant logics," what concepts might contribute to developing a viable and coherent higher education system by embracing them ?

Complexity

It is increasingly recognized today that any social system is complex, that is, contains a great deal of information within a large set of interconnected subsystems, each of which affects the other. A characteristic of a complex system is its change over time, or its evolution as a *complex adaptive system* (e.g., Gell-Mann, 1994) as new information is acquired or entrained. Thus, academic units of child and youth care must be open to new information and poised to adapt to a rapidly changing context while challenging old values, in essence be able to respond to changes in its environment without totally abandoning its core identity. To fail to do so is to maintain a naive simplicity that places the academic program, and others like it, in jeopardy.

Coherence

A related concept from complexity theory, the notion of coherence indicates that the complex systems that relate to higher education must be

brought into alignment. This would include such elements as a recognized career path in the field linking offerings both in training and education; analogous structures and content among the higher education programs that currently exist; a "critical mass" of viable academic programs that share values, core content, instructional philosophies, that can publicly represent the identity of the field.

Futurism

Central to functioning as a complex adaptive system is being futuristically oriented, looking for and being sensitive to trends and patterns in all pertinent areas—society as a whole, development and its contexts (e.g., family patterns, economic factors, organization of human services, etc.). Interestingly, both child and youth work and higher education do not seem to be futuristically oriented. Both entities tend to be rooted in the immediacy of concrete administrative concerns (valid though they may be) and of specific academic disciplines. Rarely do individual programs do the kind of broad scan that actually touches on the societal and environmental factors that impinge on the lives of children, youth and families; and on the nature of educational institutions. For example, changing weather patterns or extreme economic fluctuations have a profound effect on people's lives. Yet such phenomena are never considered when considering professional personnel preparation.

Epistemology

There are current trends in epistemology—the nature of knowledge— which are highly relevant to child and youth work higher education. Postmodernism, in which empirically derived knowledge is questioned, in which value systems and dominant entities govern the generation of knowledge, and in which hierarchical dominance is disdained, has implications for advancing academically based child and youth work. Similarly, hermeneutic philosophy, concerned with interpretation and meaning (e.g., Nakkula & Ravitch, 1998) has the potential to transform child and youth work practice.

Importation of concepts and models

Knowledge, value systems and constructs from other fields ranging from the hard sciences to business must be imported to provide an open ended, complex context for evaluating the knowledge base, concepts of professions, strategies for enhancing the field, etc. Similarly, progressive delivery models from other related fields (e.g., teacher education) can be imported.

Theory and practice

A recent publication in early childhood articulated a crucial fact with profound implications for professional education: *that we already know*

essentially what helps children grow into sound adults (2000). The issue then is not to stuff further data based studies into the professional journals on library shelves, but *rather to translate these findings in practice premises and make sure that conditions are established for their application.*

Application of management science

We wish to challenge the hard bound academic value that business concepts, including entrepreneurship, do not belong in academic environments. Perhaps higher education should not be run like a *corporation*. But it should definitely consider those concepts and models from *management science* that have enabled businesses to be successful. Strategic planning, models for encouraging change, and marketing, among others, are particularly relevant. Marketing, for example, is more than publicity or "promotion"—although this is very important for this field—and also includes planning, and product configuration.

ADDRESSING THE COMPONENTS OF
HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHILD AND YOUTH WORK

A transformative model of higher education must infuse the above perspectives, along with results of a continual assessment of contextual and external influences on the field, into higher education's conduct of the traditional functions and structures.

Relationships with external environments

Interestingly, even though businesses continually scan their external environments and their contexts, academic units in higher education frequently do not. Rather, they continue to "do business the way they have before" even though contexts have changed and there are external occurrences that are highly pertinent to the relevance and effectiveness of the work they might be doing. Here, the concepts of futurism and management science, such as futurism, trend analysis, and marketing, could apply.

There are marvelous resources on future trends that are readily available, such as the publications of the World Future Society (e.g., Marx, 2001). It is incredibly easy to use currently available resources such as trend analysis methods to identify emergent occurrences that any educational program preparing personnel for the workplace needs to consider. Societal trends, shifts and needs in the human service system, emergent developmental characteristics of children, youth and families—all should be continually reviewed with an eye to seeing what innovations and changes might be made in all aspects of higher education content and delivery.

Marketing is recognized as a powerful concept in business, but is given less attention and application in human services. Often misunderstood and misinterpreted as dealing only with "advertising,"

marketing is a process whose premises include planning based on environmental scanning so that an entity can properly "position" itself and identify and build upon its "distinctive competence" so that it can best be valued by and serve its "target markets." A vital child and youth care higher education program in the future should apply marketing concepts to its work in the same way it might utilize a model for curriculum design. The concepts of external and internal marketing can be particularly useful.

External Marketing.   External marketing is concerned with constituencies outside of an organization. In the case of child and youth work,   there might be a need for *continual*   activity to promote the emergent profession, for example, presentations at non-self organized (by the child and youth care field) conferences and articles and publications in "out-of-the field" journals. Position within-field conferences and other communication processes to appeal to   related disciplines and professions.   Faculty members in child and youth work professions should initiate relationships with the mass media, with an eye to not only providing accurate and timely information on developmental issues, but also drawing attention to those activities that are positive.

Internal Marketing.   Internal marketing refers to promoting a product or service within its sponsoring organization. For child and youth   work,   this   could   include   initiating   meetings   and   other communications with administrators to give progress reports, ask advice, seek resources, and describe accomplishments. If child and youth work educators do not take initiative to assertively promote their work internally, then they should not lament if their efforts are ignored or given low priority.

Organizational and planning function of the administrative and academic unit

Organizational ·design and planning is another area often compromised by child and youth work education programs. Colleges and universities themselves in general develop long-term plans, master plans and the like. Much smaller units, however, may not have these, nor do they look at their own "organizational structure" to see how it might function more efficiently and effectively. Nor, in some cases, might they formally attend to the larger plans developed by the institution as a whole.

To remain viable, an academic unit might consider formally studying contemporary planning models—which tend to focus on the more immediate future rather than long term, since that is so unpredictable— utilizing them continually to reposition its offerings. This practice would generate continual energy that would tend to affect surrounding systems rather than leave the academic unit itself, less strongly bounded and hence more vulnerable.

Mission of academic institutions

Traditionally, academic institutions focus on three prime missions: research and scholarship, teaching, and community service. In reality, and in evaluation of faculty performance, research is more valued than teaching, and teaching is more valued than is community service.

Child and youth work academic programs should take initiative to reframe these areas and emphases that are appropriate to the nature of the field and the work.

Research and scholarship

Certainly empirical research is important as a source of knowledge for the field. But the postmodern era has ushered in a challenge to the rational-empiricist tradition in what knowledge is acceptable. The following could encourage timely reframing of the current "dominant logic" of research and scholarship:

Focusing on developing a "practice scholarship." Currently there are thousands of articles on development of children and what experiences promote it. Unfortunately the translation of this knowledge into useful practice principles is lacking (e.g., National Research Council Institute of Medicine, 2000). Child and youth work programs should turn their efforts to identifying, retrieving, synthesizing, translating into practice principles, and testing, empirical information. Simultaneously, they might be studying current "best practice" to identify what practices are most related to attainment of positive outcomes by children, and what knowledge and skills are needed by the professional workforce to provide these.

Encouraging more varied research methods. Post-modernism and hermeneutics do not suggest that empirical research should be abandoned, but rather that other forms of scholarship and research be more directly embraced due to their appropriateness to the subject matter to concerns in preparing practitioners. These can include, for example, analogical scholarship, in which concepts external to a field are used as a lens for examining it in a new light; combinatory scholarship, that integrates theory, empirical research, and practice and anecdotal information into new perspectives with practice implications; and research approaches that combine and integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Teaching. While teaching will be considered in more detail in the "delivery" section of this paper, teaching in child and youth work programs needs to be given greater weight as long as that teaching is based on consideration of pedagogies appropriate to the "ill-structured" knowledge of child and youth work, and to encouraging student outcomes that can be directly translated into the practice setting.

The significance of community service. In a reframed approach to higher education, community service in the form of partnerships, consultancies, collaborations, and the like should be given heightened emphasis. These activities actually form the crux of the capacity to connect higher education with the world of practice.

Child and youth work faculties should take the initiative to ensure that their perspectives are included in institutional planning and values; and that within their own units, they not only have their own mission statement that is continually shared both externally and internally, but also that they continue to re-examine it in the light of new information. This also avoids "model drift" in which the activities of a program gradually move away from their formally espoused purpose, perhaps then going in an undesired direction.

Historical, current and emergent scope of a field

The evolving nature of a field is obviously a concern in higher education programs. Certainly an aspect of higher education in child and youth work that needs to be considered continually is the scope of the field— who are practitioners being prepared to serve, what roles are they filling, and what concept of development as a profession is the field following?

Scope of the field. The field of child and youth care historically has redrawn its boundaries to move from considering only disturbed young people in and out of home care to both normal and exceptional children and youth across types of settings. A family-centered approach has also emerged in the past decade or so. Now it is time to consider that the age range served by child and youth work be extended so that perhaps the name would come to be "applied developmental care" and the population served would extend throughout the life span. This would turn professionalization efforts appropriately on the service provided rather than on a specific age group in view of the fact that there has still never been a full, respected, effective profession that is "age group," "category group" and "setting specific" (VanderVen, 1993).

Concept of a profession. It is important as well that the higher education sector of the field continually examine the concept of a profession that situates its structure and content. Begun and White (1996) described how the "dominant logic" of the traditional sociological model of a profession espoused by nursing has become increasingly dysfunctional in the face of rapid change and future uncertainty. If epistemological and theory-practice issues are considered, then the traditional sociological model of a profession that still governs other human service professions is not only not completely suitable for child and youth work emerging into a life span profession of applied development, but also it offers the opportunity to enact a more flexible and contextual model without sacrificing those attributes of a profession that lead to a better prepared workforce, better service, and better outcomes.

Curriculum and para-curriculum

The content of a field emerging into a profession has multiple sources that should continue to be examined in the light of the ongoing planning and external scanning process, and translated into the content offered in higher education. This hopefully would result in a coherent curricular system within an overall educational system for the field emerging into a new profession. Such a curricular system would include not only recommended content, but also offer a para-curriculum of themes relevant to the field that would cross individual learning experiences.

External guidelines. Where there are curricular guidelines developed by an external body representing the field, for example, the draft guidelines of the North American Competency and Certification Project (Mattingly, 2001), these of course should be seriously considered in designing and revising curriculum. These provide important "clout" and credibility to any program and serve it well in promoting its legitimacy to dubious administrations and other publics. It is important in doing so, however, that there be some room for the inclusion of "local knowledge" that is pertinent to geographical areas and cultural groups, and for the structure not to be so locked in that there is no opportunity for fairly rapid modification, if indicated.

Roles. Higher education must provide preparation for all roles in a human service profession: direct practitioner, administrator, trainer, researcher, advocate, etc. A particular responsibility would be educating for leadership —as a more complex and embracing role beyond administration. Leaders would need to know strategies for inducing change, building wide constituencies, and the like. In fact, they should be particularly familiar with the concept of "dominant logic" and nonlinear dynamical systems theory as it enables them to view the systemic aspects of any situation or concern more powerfully, and encourages any actions taken to be systemically oriented.

Levels. The education sector needs to provide articulated preparation from the associate degree through the doctoral level. If there is no profession without higher education, so also is there no profession that does not have a doctoral level of preparation. Doctoral research can pioneer the application of more hermeneutic approaches, qualitative and ethnographic approaches, development of practice principles from theory and observed practice, and the like.

Generic and specific content. A professional curriculum is both generic and specific, depending on the educational level. A lower educational level might be specific (e.g., target one age group or setting) whereas a midlevel one would be generic (provide knowledge and practice skills applicable across age groups and settings). The highest levels might then focus on specific issues.

Standards and Accreditation. The issue of standards and accreditation is one of balance. On one hand, it strengthens the credibility of a program to be connected to external formal requirements and can serve as an attraction to students as well as leverage point to gain needed resources from administrations. On the other hand they can restrain flexibility and quick adaptability to external shifts and emergent needs. Perhaps the way to challenge the "dominant logic" of invariant standards and accreditation is to make sure that curricular structures reflect any recognized standards to some extent while making sure to have "wiggle room" that would enable innovation.

Para-Curriculum.

The para-curriculum might address those characteristics of students that would tend to hinder their learning of this particular field or their professional effectiveness subsequent to their sojourn in a higher education program. Areas to be addressed might include:

Presentation skills. One of the "dominant logics" of many students in child and youth work is that polished presentation of themselves and their work is counter to the values of caring practice. This needs to be incisively addressed; students need to learn how polished presentation leads to greater effectiveness, influence, and professional opportunity. This ranges from appropriate dress to handling appointments to preparing a professional vita.

Proactive value system. Similarly another common "dominant logic" of students is passivity and modesty. They need to be encouraged to view taking action and seeking out and taking advantage of opportunities as compatible with the overarching value system of the field.

Remedial work. Remedial work in writing and other academic skills should be valued as acceptable and "automatic" if needed. Students often are taken aback when they receive feedback for a first effort. They should be encouraged to recognize the impressive gains they make when they revise their work.

Reflective practitioner. The concept of development of professional competence through being a "reflective practitioner" is pertinent to helping students address their "dominant logics" in a less threatening way. This constructivist notion encourages practitioners to continually reflect on their work, to try to apply new knowledge to their reflections, and to change their practice principles as a result.

Delivery

How a curriculum is actually configured for *delivery* to learners is as essential to preserving and developing a higher education as is the

content itself. There are three crucial ideas pertinent to advancing delivery: the role of technology, the professional development school and demonstration programs.

Technology. There is no doubt obviously that technology is a great boon to delivering education. It can connect people and promote the interconnectedness that encourages evolution of a complex adaptive system, it can make large amounts of pertinent information readily accessible, and it can make many cumbersome processes more efficient. At the same time, the field needs to be careful not to fall into the trap of being unaware of recursion effects when something new is overdone, as is technologically based education. There is no better field than child and youth work for bearing in mind the crucial finding of the futurist John Naisbitt (1984) of "high tech-high touch." The more we interact with machines, the more we will want to interact with people! This paradoxical premise reflects a complexity notion and should be borne in mind when configuring delivery of educational programs, so there is a *balance* between what can best be delivered through technology and what *must* be provided by a "face to face" encounter with teachers and other learners. The notion of "distributed education," in which education is delivered by a variety of means, rather than one (i.e., technology) is pertinent here.

Professional Development School. This model proposes that the traditional academic model of organization into a program or department, with predominant "classroom" style instruction and some "field" instruction is relatively ineffectual and even uneconomical *given the nature of the work and the rapid changes occurring in notions of professions and in human services*. Professional Development Schools, which have been pioneered in elementary education and in the notion of analogical scholarship, can and should be considered for their ability to appropriately deliver preparation in child and youth work education. Professional development schools address the theory-practice "breach" by transferring the higher education institution dominance in relative isolation from the practice community, to a partnership with it. Essentially professional development schools offer an environment that integrates learning service to children and learning of adults, parity for partners—higher education, professional associations, agencies and simultaneous renewal of both university and school (agency) through partnerships and collaboration. The result of this places the locus of practice preparation more directly in the sites in which students would ultimately practice, and also allows the transmission of theoretical knowledge to the site more readily.

Demonstration Programs. With rare exception as exemplified by the Child and Youth Care Learning Center Model, founded by Mark Krueger at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (VanderVen, 1994), child and youth work programs have no demonstration model programs which

have been so central to related fields (early childhood education; teacher education). There should be at least one demonstration quality program per academic unit or a small network of collaborating partners, where the practice is governed by notions of *what is best practice*, rather than restrictions from managed care and the like.

Faculty and staff

The success of the challenge to "dominant logics" of higher education will rest on the personnel of any academic child and youth work unit. It is crucial that the "configuration" of faculty and staff in an academic unit be "dynamic"—that is combine stability and openness to change.

Balance between academic and "practice" faculty. Because the "dominant logic" that the essential purpose of research is to produce empirical information about the relationship between developmental variables, there is a danger that effective practice knowledge will not be derived and applied. Thus it is important that an academic unit have both traditional "academic" faculty who may be more likely to do the customary empirical research; and "practice" faculty with considerable direct and "clinical" experience who are concerned with forms of scholarship such as those already described that observe practice, relate theory and empirical research to it, and recommend effective practice principles.

Tenure. There are a number of premises around tenure that can be proposed that in point challenge some "dominant logics" of holding tenure. Of course it is crucial that there be a "critical mass" of tenured faculty in an academic unit. They can provide the stability that serves as a critical mass to bring forward crucial matters of value and identity, to resist attack, and to advocate externally for other programs and related matters that can extend and advance the field. At the same time, tenured faculty might be encouraged to recognize that it is insufficient for child and youth work faculty to pursue their academic and professional interests without ensuring that they revert back to the overall mission of the program. A child and youth care tenured faculty member might constantly ask, "How are my scholarship, community service relating to the academic program as a whole? A higher education "dominant logic" that, once tenured, faculty can be "left alone" without further efforts to encourage them to address the missions and plans for their academic unit, needs to be abandoned. Properly conducted, posttenure reviews can be useful in enabling faculty to be connected to the larger purposes of their academic unit.

Staff. Staff of academic programs may or may not "buy in" to the "dominant logic" of some staff of higher education programs everywhere: that there is a natural breach between faculty and other staff members. This can lead to unproductive inefficiency and indifference. It is important

that staff be considered as integral to the positive functioning of an academic unit as the faculty. This can then challenge their dominant logic, decrease resistance and increase a "buy in" to the overall purposes of the academic program. Staff should be encouraged to pursue a program of professional development that will best use their talents and enable them to advance within the "system" just as faculty might; and to do whatever they can to ensure that staff is not underpaid. There needs to be *sufficient* staff with multiple skills so that tasks can be most appropriately distributed to those who can do them best at the highest level of their competence. Neither faculty nor staff for both efficiency and effectiveness should spend too much time in tasks that are below their skill level.

Students

Recruitment. In recent years the "dominant logic" that students in higher education come from the age group of 18 to 22 years has increasingly given way to the notion of a diverse student body in terms of age and experience. Child and youth work particularly benefits from a varied student body—those with more direct experience have much to offer those with less, while those who perhaps have more formal education can challenge these practitioners to undertake more academic learning. In line with this, proactive marketing methods which are now well developed in higher education might be utilized in order to construct a vital, varied and dynamic student body. A targeted effort might be made to recruit career changers into the field—often people who have worked in business and industry wish to abandon the "dominant logics" of these occupations and change to working in more "people oriented" fields.

Student support. In the future, the not always productive trend of students needing to "work their way through school" needs to be addressed incisively as literal lack of sleep and stress by students detracts from their ability to properly attend to the academic and practice demands of the program. Thus it is crucial for all faculty and staff to find ways to support students financially. The great need for student financial support ties in well with the concept of a professional development school approach.

Induction. The notion that education ends at "graduation" might be abandoned in a transformed model of higher education. A formal induction program to support initial graduates in their work and professional development, a concept again borrowed from teacher education, might serve child and youth work graduates very well to provide them useful guidance as they undertake the challenges of direct practice.

CONCLUSION

This paper has described how some of the "dominant logics" of higher education and the child and youth field in it might now be viewed to encourage the advancement of the field into a profession as well as to ensure continuation and growth of its higher education sector especially during these times of rapid change. Concepts for viewing higher education activity in a way that would modify the dominant logics' effects were presented along with suggested applications to the various components of a higher education system.

If the field of child and youth work is proactive in addressing these issues and advocating for higher education, it not only can succeed, but it can actually pioneer a model of higher education that is relevant to other fields and professions as well. The opportunity is here...will we seize it ?

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