



Mapping the Range of Graduate Student Professional Development: Studies in Graduate and Professional Student Development, Number 14

Border, Laura L. B., ed.
New Forums Press, Inc., 2011

Book Review

Tags: graduate students | professional development | teacher training

Reviewed by: Kayko Driedger Hesslein, *Graduate Theological Union*

Date Reviewed: December 25, 2014

Graduates from religion and theology programs cannot expect to be hired to teaching positions (tenure-track or adjunct) without prior teaching experience, as the current job market demands that candidates gain significant experience and training prior to graduation. Graduate programs must therefore augment their academic offerings to students with an education that prepares them for successful teaching careers. To that end, a number of universities across diverse fields have adopted intentional Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) programs to prepare future faculty for a profession of teaching.

The collection of essays in this volume examine multiple options for offering this kind of training, from institution-wide certification programs for teaching to single courses on pedagogy that can be embedded into existing degree requirements. Several chapters present case studies, providing a range of models for how an intentional GTA program might operate. Most of the programs reviewed are overseen by research universities with large student populations, such as the University of California-Berkeley. These programs are cross-curricular and focus exclusively on increasing teaching experience, and can be easily adapted for training teachers of theology and religion.

This volume is most useful for those who are at least generally familiar with the rationale for training graduate students for teaching vocations and the value of it, and who are familiar (in knowledge if not in fact) with formal GTA programs. Administrators of GTA programs will find this a helpful reference volume as it provides information about how GTA programs compare

with one another – including data on the kinds of training being offered (programs, certificates, and courses). Those who have the beginnings of a program and want to improve it will find examples of success (and failure) in schools of comparable size and student population, and find lists pertaining to the components of robust programs. Administrators of programs in schools operating with limited resources will want to read Chapter 8, “Leveraging Existing PFF (Preparing Future Faculty) Resources to Create a Certificate of University Teaching” (125-146), which describes the steps Duquesne University followed to develop a Certificate of Teaching program from meager resources.

This is a data-rich volume, although the editors acknowledge the lack of discussion on teaching-related training regarding the ethics of teaching and professional behavior (170), as well as training to teach diversity (171). Also of note, the essays address professional development only insofar as it relates to teaching. They do not address training for supplementary skills needed to prepare future faculty of theology and religious studies, such as administration, community involvement, or advising/mentoring undergraduates.

In addition to preparing graduate students to teach, forward-thinking Professional Development Programs should consider careers for their graduates beyond teaching. To that end, programs should also include training in how to apply degree-related skills to the nonprofit sector, as well as education-based, non-teaching careers (such as administration and editing). Administrators will want to keep an eye on future publications of the series *Studies in Graduate and Professional Student Development* to supplement this otherwise comprehensive and detailed volume.

https://wabash.center/resources/book_reviews/mapping-the-range-of-graduate-student-professional-development-studies-in-graduate-and-professional-student-development-number-14/