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## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCHOOLS OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY CORE CURRICULUM CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

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### Introduction

The San Antonio conference on the core curriculum in professional psychology, sponsored by the National Council of Schools of Professional Psychology (NCSPP), adopted a detailed set of resolutions that appear in this chapter after some introductory comments. Four curricular values were explicitly identified: a broadened view of the educational domain of professional psychology; the existence of multiple ways of knowing; necessary mastery of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and the preparation for lifelong learning. The conferees affirmed the value of "diversity and inclusiveness as fundamental elements of human experience" (p. 159, current chapter), the necessity of education of the personal and professional self of the student, the importance of preparation for multiple professional roles, a broadly defined view of curriculum, the centrality of relationships to the clinical enterprise, and the importance of the responsible use of power and authority.

The San Antonio conference is one of a series of annual conferences sponsored by NCSPP that enable the systematic and intentional explication of standards for the education and training of professional psychologists. At the pivotal Mission Bay conference in 1986–1987, NCSPP members endorsed the view that professional applications of psychology should be related to an evolving knowledge base and to the recognition that knowledge, skills, and attitudes are equally important parts of the training experience.

Six core areas were identified: relationship, assessment, intervention, research and evaluation, consultation and education, and management and supervision. Reaffirming and expanding on the Mission Bay resolutions, the San Antonio conferees developed and endorsed more specific explications of these six professional core curriculum areas.

## **Curricular Values and Conference Themes**

The preamble to the core curriculum conference resolutions affirms general values relevant to professional psychology supported by NCSPP before moving to articulate particular curricular values. Taken together, they reflect significant conference themes. The values and themes to which the conferees committed are not readily apparent in many psychology training programs. Here are some of the most important elements of the resolutions along with selected commentary.

### **Broadened Educational Domain**

The educational domain of professional psychology is characterized by scholarly, disciplined thought that is grounded in science, in the humanities, and in personal and professional experience and is enhanced by interdisciplinary studies. Although nearly every graduate program describes the scholarly discipline of psychology as scientific, the conferees broke new ground by asserting that the discipline also is grounded in the humanities and in personal and professional experiences.

### **Multiple Ways of Knowing**

There are multiple ways of knowing. These include both objective and subjective methods. Few would debate that psychological knowledge derives from empirical investigation. However, to maintain that valid knowledge also derives from subjective methods, such as the client-psychologist relationship, is a departure from conventional views of how psychological knowledge is obtained.

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes**

The demonstrated mastery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and their integrated application to the practice of psychology is essential. Whereas, traditionally, doctoral programs have expected the mastery and demonstration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to research, the conferees asserted the importance of comparable systematic training in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to professional practice.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Consistent with the value of lifelong learning, the core curriculum should be seen as initiating the process of lifelong professional development and not as an end in itself.

This perspective assumes that there is an ongoing growth of competence in the practice of psychology and necessitates mechanisms to monitor competence.

### **Valuing Human Diversity**

The valuing of human diversity and inclusiveness as core and fundamental elements of human experience and thus as a part of the core curriculum of professional psychology education was reaffirmed. Before the San Antonio conference, NCSPP (i.e., the Mission Bay conference participants and the NCSPP 1988–1989 Puerto Rico conference participants) unanimously enacted resolutions that endorsed the centrality of considerations of diversity in education and training. At San Antonio, the conferees acted on the premise that “considerations of diversity should be integrated throughout the scientific–academic and professional elements of the curriculum” (p. 159, current chapter), and they intentionally integrated this concern into each of the six competency areas of the professional psychology core curriculum. Participants recognized the need for curricular innovations and reconstruction to integrate diversity truly into the education of students.

### **Education of the Personal Self**

NCSPP members affirmed the value premise that subjective methods of knowing are important in educating psychologists. This explicit theme focused on education of the personal as well as the professional self of students. The foundation of training professional psychologists is the recognition that all professional psychology is relationship centered. Thus, the first professional competency area—relationship—was defined and the knowledge base identified. NCSPP members asserted that the core curriculum should include the intentional education and training of students in the development of interpersonal skills, empathy, and respect for others. Essential elements of curriculum design and implementation for the relationship competency were specified as experiential learning, opportunities for self-reflection and awareness, direct observation of relationship behaviors, and feedback by peers and experts. A significant feature of relationship knowledge, as endorsed by NCSPP members, was the recognition that (a) inequalities of power and authority determine the nature of relationships, and (b) power and authority can be used responsibly.

### **Multiple Roles**

Preparation for multiple roles as a professional psychologist was a clear, well-documented theme of the conference. The array of possible roles of the practicing psychologist was identified as including assessor, intervener, educator, consultant, supervisor, administrator, program developer, researcher, and program evaluator. NCSPP members endorsed core competency areas that prepare students for these multiple roles as the organizing principle for a coherent approach to curriculum construction. The clients to be served by professional psychologists were defined broadly to include individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, social systems, and sociopolitical structures. Both the roles of practicing psychologists and their potential clients require schools that

train professional psychologists to give careful consideration to the relevance and to the verifiability of the educational objectives of their core curricula.

Some of the roles ascribed to professional psychologists are commonly accepted and are included in the core curricula of most programs. Although the emphasis on degree of mastery may vary, research, assessment, and intervention knowledge base and skills exist, to some extent, in most training programs. Almost all training programs, however, ignore or minimize training for the roles of educator, consultant, administrator, supervisor, program developer, and program evaluator. When these roles were considered at the Mission Bay conference, participants endorsed their inclusion in the list of professional core competencies. Yet few NCSPP member programs actually had or have now articulated curricular means of achieving these competencies. As member schools systematically and intentionally have considered the designated professional core competencies, recognition of their importance has increased. A random review of the program bulletins of several American Psychological Association (APA)-approved non-professional school doctoral programs revealed that none directly addressed teaching, consultation, program development, or management. When supervision was taught, curricular emphasis usually was on the student receiving supervision, not learning how to supervise others.

### Conference Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from NCSPP's core curriculum conference. The core curriculum was seen as dynamic not static. The content areas of the knowledge base that were endorsed were similar to those specified in APA's accreditation criteria, with some notable additions. NCSPP members promoted knowledge and skill bases that were broader than those designated by APA, and the members specified that they must take into consideration the self of the student, diversity in all its forms, and the actual roles psychologists are required to assume in the marketplace. In addition, issues of power, authority, and sociopolitical structures must be included in the training of professional psychologists.

Most important, NCSPP participants resolved that the core curriculum must include an integration of theory and practice such that effective use of theory can be demonstrated in solving human dilemmas. Critics have assumed that, sometimes incorrectly, research skills are devalued when doctoral education is provided by professional schools. One of the required six professional core competencies endorsed by NCSPP was research and evaluation, defined in part by the concept of local clinical scientist (see Trierweiler & Stricker, chap. 14). At the Mission Bay conference, NCSPP participants emphasized the importance of evaluation (McHolland et al., 1987).

A final conclusion to be drawn from the core curriculum conference is that NCSPP is taking seriously its stated purpose to "advance the development of the highest quality of graduate training in professional psychology" (Bent, 1987, p. vii). The conferees at the Mission Bay conference defined the parameters of NCSPP's mission. Now NCSPP systematically is defining and is committing itself and its member schools to a set of standards for the practitioner model of education and training of professional psychologists. Diversity issues and standards were made explicit at the Puerto Rico conference. Now for the first time in American psychology, the core curriculum of professional psychology has been defined to include practice competencies. In 1991 the NCSPP conference will focus on women's issues. Evaluation will be the focus of the 1992 conference.

Each of these conferences can be expected to carry forth the explication of the standards to which professional schools of psychology aspire and against which they will measure their effectiveness in the education and training of professional psychologists.

The actual NCSPP core curriculum conference resolutions are presented in the remainder of this chapter. The resolutions were developed through a complex political process that included (a) drafts composed by subgroups; (b) line-by-line scrutiny during plenary sessions; (c) particular editorial changes of words or phrases proposed by members; and (d) ultimately, a series of votes on the document, sometimes attending to sections as small as a paragraph.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCHOOLS OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY CORE CURRICULUM CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

### Preamble

The primary goal of education for professional psychology is preparation for the delivery of human services in a manner that is effective and responsive to individual needs, societal needs, and diversity. The learning environments, including resources and curriculum, should be designed in a manner that accomplishes this goal, and should be open to continuous development and evaluation.

The curriculum comprises a broad set of explicit learning experiences that include courses, seminars, practica, and experiential learning. There also are socialization processes that comprise an implicit curriculum in professional psychology that includes educational methods, faculty characteristics, the nature of student-faculty relationships, program culture, and the attitudes and values of the total educational community. The synergistic relationship between the explicit and implicit components of the curriculum must be considered in curriculum design and implementation.

The primary task of education in professional psychology is preparation for effective functioning in the multiple roles graduates will fill during the course of their careers. These roles might include, but are not limited to: assessor, intervener, educator, consultant, supervisor, administrator, program developer, researcher, and program evaluator.

Preparation in professional psychology involves the education of the personal and professional selves of students. Furthermore, all of professional psychology is relationship centered. A central and integrating feature is the awareness of self and self-other relatedness. Professional socialization experiences should be designed to foster student awareness of how students' personal and professional selves affect and are affected by their professional relationships, their profession, their training, the culture of their programs, and their clinical work. The knowledge of how inequalities of power and authority determine the nature of relationships and the promotion of responsible use of power and authority are critical elements of this experience.

Professional psychology values diversity and inclusiveness as fundamental elements of human experience. We understand diversity to include, but not be limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual preference, religion, age, physical and mental challenge, culture, and worldview. Considerations of diversity should be integrated throughout the scientific-academic and professional elements of the curriculum. Cur-

ricular innovations with regard to diversity require particular attention and reinforcement.

### **Attitudes, Aptitudes, and Values**

We reaffirm the Mission Bay resolutions with regard to attitudes, aptitudes, and values together with the following additions and clarifications:

1. In order to function most effectively in varied professional roles, a professional psychologist should demonstrate certain personal characteristics and attitudes, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Intellectual curiosity and flexibility.
  - b. Scientific skepticism.
  - c. Open-mindedness.
  - d. Psychological health.
  - e. Belief in the capacity for change in human attitudes and behavior.
  - f. Appreciation of individual and cultural diversity.
  - g. Interest, courage, and compassion in providing human services, especially to underserved populations.
  - h. Personal integrity and honesty.
  - i. Capacity for developing interpersonal skills (empathy, respect for others, personal relatedness).
  - j. Self-awareness.
2. The theory and application of professional psychology are characterized by a disciplined scientific attitude.
3. Diversity in personal and academic background on the part of faculty and students enhances education and performance as professional psychologists. Student admission committees and faculty recruitment committees are encouraged to seek out and promote such diversity of personal and academic background.
4. Professional consultative relationships within and external to professional psychology are a valuable means of enhancing the quality of professional judgments in the professional applications of psychology.
5. Professional psychology programs should participate actively in the evolving health care delivery system in the best interest of society.
6. Professional psychology programs must make their values explicit as they relate to the student's education and training.
7. Professional psychology programs should provide educational and training experiences that focus on inculcating professional identification among faculty and students.
8. Professional psychology programs should devote sufficient resources to faculty development that supports professional attitudes and values.

### **Curricular Values**

With regard to the core curriculum of professional psychology, the following curricular values are of particular importance:

1. The educational domain of professional psychology (e.g., its theories, research

methods, and applications) is characterized by scholarly, disciplined thought that is grounded in science, the humanities, and personal and professional experience and is enhanced by interdisciplinary perspectives.

2. There are multiple ways of knowing that inform and enrich each other. These include both objective and subjective methods.
3. The demonstrated mastery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and their integrated application to the practice of psychology is essential.
4. Consistent with the value of lifelong learning, the core curriculum should be seen as initiating the process of lifelong professional development and not as an end in itself. The ongoing maintenance and growth of competence in the practice of psychology should be monitored through processes that include but are not limited to continuing education, self-reflection, consultation, and peer review.

#### **Resolutions With Regard to NCSPP in Support of Curriculum Development**

1. NCSPP shall support efforts to communicate the variety of curricular designs on learning. Approaches to curricular construction should encourage diversity, innovation, and experimentation in the service of reaching well-defined curricular goals.
2. NCSPP shall establish a learning resource center as a repository of relevant audio-visual resources, written material, course syllabi, experiential learning formats, interactive computer technologies, administrative policies, programs, and strategies for implementing change. Resources should incorporate and support perspectives of diversity.
3. NCSPP shall develop a resource bank of members who can act as consultants on curricular issues for member schools.
4. NCSPP shall promote and facilitate collaborations among member schools on scholarly activities and projects such as textbooks and grants.

#### **Resolutions With Regard to Member Institutions in Support of Curriculum Development**

1. Program descriptions should make explicit the attitudes and values that underlie the curriculum and how these attitudes and values manifest themselves in the total program.
2. Programs should ensure that students of professional psychology are taught by faculty who model these values and attitudes and who reflect a diversity of perspectives in their teaching and in their practice of psychology (i.e., as in settings, populations, and orientations).

### **The Professional Psychology Core Curriculum**

The competency areas of professional psychology represent key related clusters of activities that are characteristic of practicing psychologists and that are related to relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The core competencies identified at Mission Bay (re-

lationship, assessment, intervention, research and evaluation, consultation and education, management and supervision) are reaffirmed and are the organizing principles for a coherent approach to curriculum construction. Each of the competency areas has been conceptualized separately for heuristic purposes. However, it is important to remember that the competencies develop together and often remain inextricably intertwined in professional practice. Professional psychologists serve clients, conceptualized in the broadest sense to include individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, social systems, and sociopolitical structures.

Within the broad framework of the six core competency areas, program diversity, built around the academic and professional interests of faculty, should be encouraged. It is the fundamental responsibility of each program faculty to develop and to articulate clearly the program's coherent goals and sequentially organized objectives in order to achieve those goals. The broad-based knowledge areas should be integrated carefully with these program goals and objectives. Programs should write verifiable educational objectives pertaining to the knowledge, attitudes, and skills requisite to the development of the competencies.

These professional competencies are related to an evolving and developing knowledge base that should include the following areas:

1. Biological bases of behavior.
2. Cognitive-affective bases of behavior.
3. Cultural bases of behavior.
4. Dysfunctional behavior and psychopathology.
5. The historical and philosophical context of psychology.
6. Life span development.
7. Professional ethics and standards.
8. Psychological measurement.
9. Social bases of behavior.
10. Theories of individual and systems functioning and change.

Instruction in these areas should be carefully integrated with the development of the six competency areas throughout the learning process and should be consistent with the mission and objectives of the program.

### **Relationship**

Relationship is the capacity to develop and maintain a constructive working alliance with clients. In the development of relationship skills of professional psychologists, special attention should be given to diversity, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual preference, religion, age, physical and mental challenge, culture, and worldview.

The relationship competency is the foundation and prerequisite of the other competencies. Therefore, its articulation in the core curriculum is of primary importance.

The relationship competency area is particularly informed by, but not limited to, (a) theories of individual and systems functioning and change, cultural bases of behavior, life span development, dysfunctional behavior and psychopathology, and professional ethics and standards; (b) knowledge of the self, and (c) knowledge of others.

Curriculum design and implementation should include education and training in attitudes essential for the relationship competency, including but not limited to (a) in-

tellectual curiosity and flexibility; (b) open-mindedness; (c) belief in the capacity to change in human attitudes and behavior; (d) appreciation of individual and cultural diversity; (e) personal integrity and honesty; and (f) a value of self-awareness.

Curriculum design and implementation should include education and training in the development of interpersonal skills, including empathy, respect for others, and personal relatedness. An essential element of training in this area is experiential learning, with self-reflection and direct observation of behavior and feedback by peers and experts. Training should embody the principles inherent in the competency (i.e., constructive working alliances among faculty and students).

### **Assessment**

Assessment is an ongoing, interactive, and inclusive process that serves to describe, conceptualize, characterize, and predict relevant aspects of a client. The assessment process uses a multimethod and multitheory approach that takes into account the sociocultural context and that focuses not only on limitations and dysfunctions but also on competencies, strengths, and effectiveness.

Assessment is a fundamental process that is involved and interwoven with all other aspects of professional practice. In recent years the emphasis of assessment appropriately has shifted from a narrow focus on tests, individuals, and psychopathology to a more comprehensive approach addressing a broader range of clients and client functions. Although training in formal techniques of assessment may occur in particular courses, it is critical that assessment, whether formal or informal, be integrated as a critical component of all aspects of the professional curriculum.

Historically, assessment has been linked to theories of individual development, psychological measurement, dysfunctional behavior, and psychopathology. With the broadening of the process, however, assessment increasingly is addressing the relationship between the individual and his or her system context; the entire life span of the individual; the biological, social, and cultural bases of behavior; and larger systems, including families, groups, organizations, and social systems. Knowledge of ethical and legal foundations is an essential aspect of competency in assessment.

The assessment curriculum is not limited to individual content courses but embodies a sequenced pattern of experiences covering general principles as well as specific techniques. These principles include, at minimum, psychological measurement theory and the logic of clinical inference. Supervised skill training is an essential component of the assessment curriculum.

Assessment training should include awareness of ethical, sociocultural, legal, and administrative issues.

The curriculum must include issues of diversity in all stages of the assessment process. Such stages include identification of the client, formulation of questions, selection of methods, gathering of information, arriving at interpretations and conclusions, verification and cross-validation of findings, and dissemination of findings.

### **Intervention**

The intervention competency is conceptualized as activities that promote, restore,

sustain, and/or enhance positive functioning and a sense of well-being in clients through preventive, developmental, and/or remedial services.

The integrative goal of the core curriculum is to establish the capacity for effective intervention. Historically, as a profession, we have trained most effectively at the level of remediation. However, clients have needs that are remedial, developmental, and preventive, and therefore, we advocate the development of broad-based curricula addressing intervention at all of these levels. As a profession, we also typically have focused on intervention with a relatively narrow range of clients. Consequently, we also recommend development of curricula for training in intervention with a greater diversity of clients.

The intervention competency relies especially on the following knowledge base: theories of individual and systems change, including the functioning and change of sociopolitical structures; theories and strategies of intervention; methods of evaluation and quality assurance; professional ethical principles and standards of practice.

Along with the information derived from psychotherapy research, the knowledge and methods appropriate to the understanding of self and the self-other relationship, as well as to the significance of power and authority, are particularly relevant.

Education and training in intervention should reflect diversity through the use of teaching materials, types of client populations, choice of teachers and supervisors, and service systems.

### **Research and Evaluation**

Psychological science is a systematic mode of inquiry involving problem identification and the acquisition, organization, and interpretation of information pertaining to psychological phenomena. It strives to make that information consensually verifiable, replicable, and universally communicable. Professional psychologists systematically acquire and organize information about psychological phenomena and often engage in the general practice of science. Nonetheless, it is recognized that, because of the particular conditions that frequently limit inquiry in the local contexts of professional psychological practice (e.g., nonrepeatability of phenomena in time, privacy, etc.), the scientific goals of consensual verifiability, replicability, and universal communicability are attainable more in principle than in practice. Despite these practical realities, we endorse a view of the professional psychologist as a local clinical scientist: an investigator of local psychological phenomena who engages in the rigorous, critical, and disciplined thought engendered in striving toward scientific goals. Therefore, research training in professional psychology should be viewed as an essential tool for developing and enhancing critical thinking in students, and it should be integrated throughout the curriculum. All of our graduates are expected to function as local clinical scientists; some of our graduates may engage more directly in the application of research methodology in roles such as program evaluator. The application or diffusion of research results into practice is an important process that should be enhanced and encouraged through research training.

Training for research competency consists of (a) designing and critiquing approaches to systematic inquiry using qualitative and quantitative methods; (b) analyzing data using various techniques, including descriptive, inferential, and both univariate and multivariate statistics, and methods appropriate to qualitative data; (c) conducting

a scholarly project on a meaningful problem typically associated with professional practice in psychology with a strategy of disciplined inquiry appropriate to the problem.

Research is not content-free and must draw on, and is instrumental in expanding, the knowledge base of psychology. In addition, particular importance is attached to the principles of psychological measurement, application of professional ethics and standards, and the historical and philosophical context of psychology.

Research occurs in a social context and invariably carries embedded values. The methods and conclusions of research should be appropriate and sensitive to the diverse populations to which they are applied. Care must be taken that generalizations are appropriate to the sample studied.

Professional psychologists, in their roles as researchers, are self-critical with respect to the methodological, sociopolitical, and philosophical implications of inquiry. They make efforts to ensure that the conclusions are consistent with the limits of research designs and that consideration particularly is given to the likelihood of negative impact on underserved populations.

It is recognized that difficult ethical and epistemological questions regarding the applications of research methods remain to be addressed.

### **Consultation and Education**

Consultation refers to the planned collaborative interaction between the professional psychologist and one or more clients or colleagues in relation to an identified problem area or program. Psychological consultation is an explicit intervention process that is based on principles and procedures found within psychology and related disciplines in which the professional psychologist has no direct control of the actual change process. Psychological consultation focuses on the needs of individuals, groups, programs, or organizations.

Education is the directed facilitation by the professional psychologist for the growth of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the learner.

The practice of consultation and education competency is informed by the knowledge base of psychology, particularly theories of individual and systems functioning and change; life span development; cognitive-affective, social, and cultural bases of behavior; and professional ethics and standards.

Students should be required to complete experiential tasks in consultative and educational activities. These experiences occur in classes, in practica, and on internship.

Consultation and education require the ability to interact effectively with diverse populations. A particularly essential element of effective interaction with diverse populations is ongoing evaluation and feedback. In the practice of consultation and education, psychologists work to enhance their clients' and learners' respect for diversity.

### **Management and Supervision**

Management consists of those activities that direct, organize, or control the services of psychologists and others offered or rendered to the public. Self-management concerns the application of similar principles to effective functioning in a professional role.

Supervision is a form of management blended with teaching in the context of relationship directed to the enhancement of competence in the supervisee.

Because the majority of graduates of professional psychology programs are employed in positions requiring management and supervisory skills, these competencies should occupy a more developed status in the core curriculum.

Issues of diversity and the development of alternative management and supervisory models should be emphasized.

The management competency is informed by the following knowledge base: professional ethics and standards, theories of individual and systems functioning and change, psychological measurement, evaluation, styles of management, service delivery and case management in a variety of settings, planning and financial management, cultural bases of behavior, and the use of technology.

The supervision competency is informed by the following knowledge base: professional ethics and standards, theories of individual and systems functioning and change, dysfunctional behavior and psychopathology, cultural bases of behavior, theoretical models of supervision, awareness of considerations of diversity.

Self-management processes and structures should be provided for students through such methods as workshops, seminars, in vivo consultation, or advisement. Demonstrated competency in supervision should include the development of receptivity to receiving supervision and the acquisition of skills in doing supervision.

Diversity shall inform all aspects of the management and supervision competency areas.