Analysis of Stewart Donaldson Article

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Stewart Donaldson, in his article, "Training Psychologists to Integrate Basic, Applied, and Evaluation Research: In Pursuit of Meaningful Contributions," argues that the current educational programs in psychology only prepare the Canadian graduates for the traditionally reversed careers like the tenure-track professor. Being aware that Psychology is both an applied and academic discipline, Stewart Donaldson proposes a new educational approach that will equip the current students with the necessary skills and knowledge to gain employment in other meaningful careers in the applied psychology discipline. His recommendation comes amidst the changing needs of the research psychologist students in Canada who are keen to pursue applied research-oriented careers that are beyond the traditionally reserved career for research psychologists. In particular, Stewart Donaldson argues that more than 80% of research psychologists in Canada no longer desire to take positions in the traditionally reversed careers like the tenure-track professor. This trend is also being replicated in different parts of the world, including the United States, where research psychologists are exploring new career opportunities in their fields (Donaldson, 2019).

Despite this growing trend, the Canadian university system has nonetheless strengthened the educational program to focus more on skills and knowledge that prepare students mainly for academic jobs and careers. Stewart Donaldson proposes that universities in Canada should adopt part or the entire psychology doctoral program that includes the development of the Doctoral Portfolio Plan (DPP) by students. This program has been in existence and practice in Claremont colleges for more than five decades after being developed by the University’s graduate faculty in psychology (Donaldson, 2019). Stewart Donaldson argues that the psychology doctoral program being practiced in Claremont colleges was developed in 1970 following an extensive consultation from successful alumni working in applied disciplines and potential employers.

Furthermore, Stewart Donaldson notes that the critical feature of Claremont Graduate University's psychology doctoral training program is the incorporation of an extensive Doctoral Portfolio Plan (DPP). The DPP teaches the students how to perform the first-class basic, applied, and evaluation researches. The skills acquired from these researches provide the graduates with relevant knowledge that can be used to solve some of the persistent of Organizational, health, economic, political, and social problems in societies worldwide (Donaldson, 2019). Besides, this program helps graduates acquire the skills and knowledge they can use to pursue their dream careers. The author also demonstrates that the Doctoral Portfolio Plan is developed within the first two years of doctoral study. To kick start the Doctoral Portfolio Plan, the student's academic advisors, the student, and two faculty committee members will hold a qualifying portfolio meeting and program planning. The meeting is primarily aimed at (a) helping the students to identify their area of specialization, (b) ascertain that the student is effectively progressing in different areas mentioned below, (c) develop a suitable portfolio for the student, and (d) evaluate the transcript of students with prior graduate work from other universities to determine the credit transfer from courses applicable to the student’s area of specialty.

Moreover, Stewart Donaldson remarks that for students to develop their DPP successfully the following factors should be considered: (1) students must select core courses that are relevant to the mastery of their area of specialization as wells as research course and any other relevant coursework outside psychology to support the chosen area of specialty. Choosing other courses besides the core subjects is meant to widen the student's knowledge base. (2) Students must include at least one item, such as theoretical integration, a meta-analysis, or review paper that integrates information in their area of specialization. (3) The student must include at least one technical report, publishable paper, or MA thesis appropriate to his or her area of specialization. (4) The Portfolio should include the student's practical experience relevant to his or her career goals. Notably, students that are keen on specializing in the nonacademic discipline must include work experiences or a field placement relevant to their area of specialization. Similarly, students that are keen on specializing in the academic discipline must include their teaching experience in at least one college course.

Once the students meet the entire requirement for the Doctoral Portfolio Plan, he or she is eligible to schedule an oral qualifying exam. If they pass the oral qualifying exam, the student can now propose a research topic to three faculty members, including his or her supervisor. Once the research topic is approved, the student is given a timeline to complete his research study and defend the doctoral dissertation. Stewart Donaldson believes that at the end of this training experience, the gradients will have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to take a wide range of career paths that would promote social betterment in Canada through meaningful career contributions.

After reading this article, what surprises me is how the Canadian University education program is providing graduates with inadequate knowledge and skills that are not vital for the development of students’ careers. I have noticed that the DPP program being offered at Claremont colleges is more comprehensive and can potentially instill relevant skills and knowledge that can be used by graduates in different fields. Also, through the article, I have learned that the psychology course has a broad job market in different fields, including health, sports, education, business, and leadership.

Finally, the finding of this article demonstrates that the current educational program in Canadian universities limits graduates to secure a wide range of career opportunities, potentially providing answers to why my cousin and other graduates in Canada are unable to secure a good job after completing their studies. This finding spark new debate on structural unemployment that has, for decades, been a core issue deeply embedded in the history of Canada. Riddell (2005) suggests that structural unemployment generally arises when there is a significant mismatch between the jobs available in the market and workers' skills and knowledge. That is, structurally unemployed people usually possess skills and experiences that are not needed or cannot be used in the current market.

For long, I have believed that an increase in Canada's structural unemployment is primarily caused by technological advancements in different sectors of the economy. The introduction of technology in the work environment is inspired by its ability to increase productivity through increased work efficiency and performance (Riddell, 2005). However, the adoption of technology in the work environment has caused some of the existing jobs to be absolute, a process known as automation. As a result, many people in the United States have been left structurally unemployed. Now it is vividly clear that the inadequate training being offered in most universities in the country is majorly contributing to structural unemployment. One possible explanation for this scenario is that grandaunts get out of Universities when they are under-skilled and fail to secure good jobs because their skills do not match with the current job market.

References

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