From a Distance
Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists in the Digital Age
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Topics
1. Brief review of the status of distance learning
2. Effectiveness of distance learning
3. Distance learning in the professions
4. Accreditation
5. Terminology
6. Survey results

PAB Distance Learning Guidelines

Intended to:

• Provide distance learning guidelines for all school psychology graduate programs...not just programs that self-describe as online or distance learning programs.
• Assist programs required/encouraged/pressured by their institutions to “digitize.”
• Provide guidance for program reviewers.
• Assist the NASP Program Accreditation Board in making decisions about program approval.

1. Status of distance learning

• Sloane Foundation’s Grade Change: Tracking Online Education in the United States* a survey of 2800 higher ed institutions:

  • About 7.1 million higher education undergraduate students are taking at least one online course. The proportion of students taking at least one online course has now reached 33.8% but the current rate of growth, 6.1%, is the lowest since the survey began.
  • The proportion of chief academic officers believing that online education is critical to their long-term strategy has gradually increased to about 66% in 2013.

1. What IS a graduate program?

A. 3+ years of full time study?
B. 18 or more courses, practica and internships?
C. 60+ hours of graduate credit?
D. Masters, Specialist, or Doctorate?
E. All of the above?

*Now cosponsored by Pearson
Corporate higher education

- Campaign for the Future of Higher Education:
  - More than 10% of college students enrolled
  - Higher ed corporations thrived during the 2000s; profits were high; stock prices soared
  - But Senator Tom Harkin’s 2012 report was not positive for the industry
  - Media publicity re scandals (recruiting, graduation rates, loans, etc.)

Trend: “Partnering”

- Coming to your university or one near you???
- University of Phoenix attempting to partner with more than 100 community colleges to accept their graduates.
- UP is partnering with Harvard to offer courses taught by Harvard faculty

Trend: “Enabling”

- Companies known as enablers or Bundled Service Providers partnering with traditional universities to offer online programs.
- Pearson subsidiary SchoolNet is doing this. CEO Don Kilburn says “it’s a very big market.”
- In 2012, Academic Partnerships earned:
  - $4 million from partnering with Arizona State
  - $10 million from Florida International
  - $18 million from Ohio U’s nursing program
- www.academicpartnerships.com

2. Effectiveness of distance learning

- Sloan Survey: Percentage of university administrators rating the learning outcomes in online education as the same or superior to those as in face-to-face instruction, grew from 57% in 2003 to 77% in 2012 and then declined slightly to 74% in 2013 (Allen & Seaman, 2014) but...
- An Inside Higher Ed survey of 2013 faculty members found a different point of view. Few faculty members (7%) strongly agreed that online courses can achieve learning outcomes at least equivalent to the outcomes of face-to-face courses.

and more beliefs

- Most faculty members (85%) believe that the quality of online courses is lower than that of face-to-face courses regarding interaction with students during class.
- About 78 percent believe that online courses are less effective at teaching “at risk” students.
- Faculty members are evenly divided on online courses’ effectiveness at meeting expected learning objectives.

Oh, you want data...not beliefs???

- US DOE meta-analysis* (2012) found:
  - Across 45 studies, students in online conditions performed modestly better than students learning the same material in face-to-face classes (effect size +0.20, p < .001).
  - This result is likely the most frequently cited finding in support of distance learning.
  - But...the authors note variations between conditions especially concerning the amount of time students spent on task.

*45 studies, 50 effect sizes, 5 studies with K-12, rest college, community college, graduate study and adults engaged in CPD
More US DOE data

- Blended courses (online and face-to-face instruction combined) had a greater advantage over face-to-face alone than did online alone (effect size +0.35, p < .001).
- But, the authors note that most studies did not equate curriculum materials, pedagogy or time on task.

and more data

- Effect sizes were greater for studies in which online instruction was collaborative or instructor-directed than when online learners studied independently.
- Effect sizes were +0.25 for collaborative and +0.39 for instructor-directed conditions.
- Note that much distance learning today is asynchronous self-study not collaborative or instructor directed.

and finally...

- The effectiveness of online learning varied across learner types. Although positive, none of the seven effect sizes for K–12 students was of practical or statistical significance.
- Studies of undergraduates resulted in a mean effect size of +0.30 (p < .001).
- Results with graduate students and professionals had a more modest mean effect size of +0.10 (p < .001).
- No...the graduate student results were not disaggregated.

A caution

- Institute for Higher Education Policy’s Review of Contemporary Research on the Effectiveness of Distance Learning in Higher Education:
  - Most studies not well controlled. No random assignment to online vs. campus.
  - Differential drop out rates influence outcomes. More distance learners drop out.
  - Results typically not disaggregated across types of students.
  - Effectiveness for different types of courses is unknown.
  - And, almost all studies focus on courses not programs.
  - And, remember...

*Phipps & Merisotis, 1999

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005)

- Completion of undergraduate programs is associated with changes in:
  - Identity
  - Self-concept and self-esteem
  - Social skills
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Career aspirations

And...

- Development of:
  - Attitudes
  - Values
  - Morals
  - Social networks
  - Decision making abilities
Social Work

- Most accredited social work programs use distance education methods to deliver some courses.
- The Council on Social Work Education has accredited a “small number of social work programs that use distance education technology...to complete a large section of their baccalaureate and master's degree requirements.”
- All accredited programs must meet the same standards and review criteria regardless of instructional methodology.
- A list of accredited distance education programs is available at: http://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Information/autoload.aspx

Counseling

- The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 2009 accreditation standards state that distance learning programs must meet the same standards as campus-based programs.
- Fujikura and Kobayashi (2013) report that as of June 2012, of 599 CACREP accredited programs, only 11 were exclusively online. At that time, however, 7 of 45 programs under review were online programs.
- It’s reported that the next version of CACREP standards will be have more detailed requirements regarding online learning.

Accredited counseling programs

- Adams State, MA in school, clinical
- Capella, MS in clinical, MFT, school
- Colorado Christian, MA in clinical
- Grace College, MA in clinical
- Messiah College, MA in school, mft, clinical
- NC Central, MA in career counseling
- Regent University, MA in school, community
- Wake Forest, MA in school, clinical
- Walden, PhD in counselor education, MS in mental health and MS in MFT

Marriage & Family

- The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy standards state that distance education cannot be a training program's sole method of teaching.
- They state “Site visits for programs utilizing distance education must also provide a meeting related to instructional technology that includes a lay explanation of methods used in delivery of course content and in supervision as well as the opportunity for Site Visit Team members to participate in a brief educational or training experience.”

Speech Pathology

- The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) defines a distance education program as one in which 50% or more of the required graduate credit hours, excluding practicum, are accrued when the student and instructor are separated.
- “Regular and substantive interaction,” however is required.
- CAA requires that distance education programs be “equivalent across all modes of delivery and that students enrolled in distance education or other modes of education delivery are held to equivalent standards and afforded equivalent access to all courses, clinical practicum opportunities and supervision, advising, student support services, program resources, etc.”

Occupational Therapy

- AOTA accreditation standards permit distance education with some stipulations:
  - A process though to establish that a student who registers in a distance education course or program is the student who participates in and completes the program and receives credit,
  - Technology and resources that are adequate to support a distance-learning environment, and
  - A process to ensure that faculty are adequately trained and skilled to use distance education methodologies.
- As of 2011, about 60% of accredited master's programs offered some distance learning courses. Few programs, however, offer a significant proportion of their instruction through distance learning methods.
- Of the 87 programs with a distance learning component most (69%) reported less than 10% of their instruction was online. Just five programs (5%) reported more than 50% of their instruction was online.
American Psychological Association

• APAs Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology (G&P) do not limit a program's use of distance learning methodologies.

• But, APA asserts in its implementation guidelines (2014) that a program “delivering education and training substantially or completely by distance education is not compatible with the G&P and could not be accredited. This is because face-to-face, in-person interaction between faculty members and students is necessary to achieve many essential components of the G&P that are critical to education and training in professional psychology, including socialization and peer interaction, faculty role modeling and the development and assessment of competencies.”

APA Regulations

• APAs implementing regulation C-27 requires that:

  1. Programs using any distance learning methods must describe in their self-studies how they meet all G&P requirements and explain how distance learning delivery is related to those requirements.

  2. Practica must be conducted face to face rather than through any virtual methodology.

  3. Programs must follow distance learning best practices and utilize evidence-based methods.

  4. Programs must disclose in their APA self-studies and to the public which aspects of their programs use distance learning methods.

4. Accreditation and distance learning

Regional accrediting bodies’ “Hallmarks of Quality”

1. Online learning is appropriate to the institution's mission and purposes

2. The institution's plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding online offerings, are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.

3. Online learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.

4. Curricula for the institution's online learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online offerings, including the extent to which the online learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.

6. Faculty responsible for delivering online learning curricula and evaluating the students' success in achieving the online learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.

7. The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in online learning offerings.

8. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.

9. The institution assures the integrity of its online learning offerings.

CAEP standards

• In general, the principles that guide the review of off-campus programs apply to the review of distance learning programs as well.

• Distance learning programs are expected to meet NCATE standards at the same level as programs offered through traditional means.

• It is also important to ensure that programs offered in full or in part through distance learning are coherent and that candidates have access to resources and are provided with adequate advising and supervision. Teams should interview candidates in distance learning programs and faculty who use this delivery system.

• Assessment data that are disaggregated for candidates in distance learning programs should indicate if differences exist in the performance of candidates in these programs versus traditional programs.

CAPE/NCATE’s 10 questions

• address such issues as:

  1. equivalence of candidate performance in online programs

  2. field experiences

  3. diversity experiences

  4. faculty qualifications to teach on line

  5. programs arranged by vendors or contractors

  6. candidate access to faculty and advisement services

  7. sample: “Standard 6: To what extent is the balance of part-time and full-time faculty, requirements for scholarship and service, and evaluation processes similar for faculty members who teach via distance learning and for other faculty members?”
“So...Topic 5
Proposed Terminology

Distance learning... 
• can be categorized as:
  • Synchronous: the instructor and students interact in real time. A live webinar in which the distant student can participate in discussion would be regarded as synchronous.
  • Asynchronous: the instructor and students do not interact in real time. An archived webinar, viewed by individual students, would be considered asynchronous.

Graduate courses...
• ...utilize distance learning methods to varying degrees along this continuum:
  • Traditional course: no online technology is used. All course content is delivered through verbal interaction and with written materials.
  • Web-facilitated course: less than 30% of course content is delivered with distance learning methods; course is mostly face-to-face. A course management system or course web page may be utilized. Courses might use “flipped” techniques.
  • Blended course: 30–79% of course content is delivered with distance learning methods with fewer face-to-face meetings than the preceding types of courses.
  • Online course: 80% or more of content is delivered online. Typically there are no face-to-face meetings.

Types of programs
• School psychology graduate programs (as opposed to courses) can be categorized by the extent to which they utilize distance learning methodology as follows:
  • Campus Program: campus-based degree program in which face-to-face instruction and supervision predominate. Such a program typically provides traditional and web-facilitated courses but few if any blended or online courses. More than 90% of program content is delivered—and learning accomplished through—live, face-to-face, instructor-student interaction.
  • Hybrid Program: Degree program that combines some distance learning with campus-based, face-to-face instruction and supervision. A hybrid program delivers 50–90% of program content, exclusive of internship, by live, face-to-face, instructor-student interaction.
  • Online Program: Degree program in which less than half of the required program content, exclusive of internship, is provided by live, face-to-face, instructor-student interaction.

DL guidelines will comprise:
• Institutional guidelines based on NASP and CAEP/NCATE standards.
• Program guidelines based on current NASP grad ed standards
• Faculty guidelines compiled from NASP standards, NCATE unit standards, and AAUP recommendations
• Course guidelines based on various best practice publications
• Candidate guidelines from various sources
• Field experience guidelines based on NASP standards
The Survey

Consisted of 10 questions:
1. Does your program offer synchronous (instructor and students interact in real time) online courses?
2. Does your program offer asynchronous (instructor and students do not interact in real time) online courses?
3. How are these online (synchronous and asynchronous) course designated on candidate transcripts?
4. How are these online courses designated in your program handbook?
5. Have you been pressured to deliver courses online?
6. Does your program have a policy on online courses?
7. Does your college/university have a policy on online courses, programs, or degrees?
8. Are these courses part of your core school psychology courses?
9. Does your program provide online supervision for practica?
10. Does your program provide supervision for internships using electronic methods?

Respondents

- 61 programs responded
- 181 programs did not respond
- 25% response rate

The Results

- 80% of programs do not offer synchronous courses. Of those that do, the percentage ranges from 3% to 90%.
- About 50% of programs offer asynchronous courses. If they do offer asynchronous courses, the range is similar. More programs responded with a range from 0% to 30%
- About 41% of programs that offer online courses (synchronous or asynchronous) do not use a designation on the transcripts; about 5% do designate online status

The Results Continued

- Little variation in how online courses are designated in program handbooks; 23% do not provide a designation, 8% use a numerical designation on the section number; 16% add a statement on syllabi
- About 50% of programs report being pressured to deliver courses online; with the highest number stating no
- 85% of programs do not have a policy on online courses; whereas about a 50% of colleges/universities do have policies
- When asked about quality course standards, several indicated using QM standards, others were not sure
More Results

- The majority (62%) of courses offered online are not part of the core school psychology courses.
- Likewise, the majority (77%) did not offer online supervision for practica; of those that did the type of program varied (Skype, FaceTime, Google, phone, GoTo Meeting).
- On the other hand, the majority (69%) do provide supervision for internship using electronic methods (the majority through Skype, phone, Google, FaceTime, GoTo Meeting).

Conclusions

- Although most programs do not yet offer distance learning courses, programs indicated that with advancing technology, a move to use of distance delivered coursework is increasing.
- The fact that programs do not have policies on online courses gives us pause and suggests that policy guidelines are needed.
- The future is here.

Please tell us

- How prescriptive should the NASP PAB be in providing guidelines to programs? Would programs find guidelines helpful?
- Is there a distance learning threshold/percent of didactic content above which NASP, like some other accrediting organizations, should not review programs? If so, what should that threshold be?
- Are there particular program courses/areas which must include face-to-face instruction or supervision in order to reach their goals? If so, which areas?
- What are some things that a predominantly DL program could do to foster affiliation with the profession?

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