Disciplinary Variations in Faculty Expressions of Publicly Engaged Scholarship During Promotion and Tenure

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Why Consider Disciplinary Variations?

In *The Academic Life*, Clark reminds us that faculty occupy “niches” They are “individuals with dual memberships in institutions and subjects” (Clark, 1987, p. 42)

Within each **discipline**, a unique subject matter defines the dimension of knowledge, the modes of inquiry, the significant reference groups, the work experiences, and the rewards of the faculty within in them.

Within **institutions**, a stratified system of multiple faculty roles preserves a hierarchical arrangement of diverse goals and achievements (Stoecker, 1993, p. 451)

**Disciplinary characteristics** are stronger influences on faculty than institutional affiliations (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Ladd & Lipset, 1975).
Research on Disciplines Using Biglan

- Faculty goal orientation
  - (Smart & Elton, 1975)
- Research output
  - (Creswell & Bean, 1981)
- Faculty salary & instructional staffing patterns
  - (Muffo & Langston, 1981)
- Professional success, research opportunities, faculty conservatism, character development
  - (Smart & Elton, 1982)
- Graduate education
  - (Malaney, 1986)
- Students’ epistemological beliefs
  - (Schommer-Aikins, Duell, & Barker, 2003)
- Faculty time use, type of faculty scholarly output, source of funding for research, faculty attitudes
  - (Stoecker, 1993)
- Choice of methodological approach to research
  - (Alise & Teddlie, 2010)
Biglan’s Three Dimensions

*Pure or Applied*: the degree of concern with application of disciplinary knowledge

*Hard or Soft*: the degree to which paradigm consensus exists in the field

*Life or Non-life Systems*: whether or not the discipline is concerned with living organisms
## Biglan’s Classification of Academic Disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hard Non-Life</th>
<th>Hard Life</th>
<th>Soft Non-Life</th>
<th>Soft Life</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pure</strong></td>
<td>Astronomy</td>
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Research Questions

Does the analysis using the Biglan Classification of Academic Disciplines reveal variations in faculty members’ publicly engaged scholarship?

1. Are there disciplinary variations in the types of activities that faculty members reports as their publicly engaged scholarship?

2. Are there disciplinary variations in the intensity of activity that faculty members reports as their publicly engaged scholarship?

3. Are there disciplinary variations in the degree of engagement that faculty members reports as their publicly engaged scholarship?
Key Constructs

**Types of Activities** employed a typology of scholarly outreach and engagement activities with 4 broad categories and 14 sub-categories (see handout).

**Intensity of Activity** included types of engagement activities, number of different types of engagement activities, frequency and duration of the engagement activities, scholarly output related to the activities, and awards/recognitions received for publicly engaged scholarship.

**Degree of Engagement** focused on depth of collaboration and included the direction or flow of information or knowledge; locus of control in decision making; extent of collaboration at different stages of the engagement process; and recognized sources of new knowledge or understanding associated with publicly engaged scholarship.

(Doberneck, Glass, Schweitzer, 2010; Doberneck, Glass & Schweitzer, 2012)
Approach to Research

Source: Faculty members’ RPT documents
- 2002-2006 across one research-intensive, land-grant, Carnegie-engaged institution in the midwest
- 173 faculty members gave consent
- Chi square analysis showed study sample was NOT significantly different than faculty population during study time period—incl. gender, race/ethnicity, primary college, and rank.

Initial Coding & Analysis: Interpretive content analysis
- Written texts or narratives, with interpretation of “key word in context” with meaning unit as unit of analysis, not individuals words (i.e. the ‘community’ problem)
- Through coding, groupings emerge that are then used to determine frequencies and conduct further analysis—qualitative data (written text) is transformed to quantitative data
- Data initially coded with absence/presence codes for types, holistic coding for intensity of activity and degree of engagement
Faculty Coded with Biglan Classifications

Faculty members were assigned Biglan codes based upon the department in which they held primary appointments.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pure</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
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<td>Total Number</td>
<td>28</td>
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## Hard vs. Soft

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Finding 1: Hard/Soft Types of Activities

Hard vs. Soft
*(the degree to which paradigm consensus exists in the field)*

**Hard**
- overall publicly engaged scholarship
- research—business, industry, commodity group
- instruction—non-credit—classes and programs
- service—patient, clinical, and diagnostic services
- commercialized activities

**Soft**
- unfunded or intramurally funded research
- instruction—for credit—nontraditional audiences
## Pure vs. Applied

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Finding 2: Pure/Applied Types of Activities

Pure vs. Applied
(the degree of concern with application of disciplinary knowledge)

Pure  none

Applied  overall
overall research & creative activities
research—business, industry, community group
research—nonprofit, foundation, government
overall instruction
instruction—noncredit—public understanding
overall service
service—technical assistance, expert testimony, legal
service—advisory board or other disciplinary related
Live vs. Non-Life

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## Finding 3: Life/Non-Life Types of Activities

### Life vs. Non-Life

*(whether or not the discipline is concerned with living organisms)*

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<td>overall research</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>non-profit, foundation, government funded research</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overall service</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>service—technical assistance, expert testimony, legal service—patient, clinical, diagnostic services</td>
<td>none</td>
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Finding 4: Intensity of Activity

- Pure vs. Applied—statistically significant $p < .031$ (applied)
- Hard vs. Soft—**not** statistically significant, $p < .145$
- Life vs. Non-life—statistically significant, $p < .000$ (life)
Finding 5:  Degree of Engagement

Pure vs. Applied—almost statistically significant, p < .07 (applied)
Hard vs. Soft—**not** statistically significant, p < .874
Life vs. Non-life—statistically significant, p < .000 (life)
Conclusions

Analysis using Biglan’s Classification of Academic Disciplines does reveal differences along the three dimensions: Pure/Applied, Hard/Soft, Life/Non-Life.

The disciplinary categories showing statistically significant differences include the following:

– Types of Activities (applied, hard, soft, life)
– Intensity of Activity (applied, life)
– Degree of Engagement (life)
Implications

Institutional and Department Levels
• Diversify examples celebrated institutionally
• Modify Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure policies—both comprehensively and flexibly
• Offer support for publicly engaged scholarship strategically

Faculty and Graduate Student Professional Development
• Recognize and appreciate disciplinary variations
  – Broad understanding (e.g., not get in way, recognize value)
  – Personal understanding of range of options and choices throughout career stages
• Consider modifications in curriculum/content
Future Directions

Expand this analysis to other similar & different institutions
- Does this analysis hold true at other research-intensive, land-grant, Carnegie-engaged institutions?
- Does this analysis reveal similar results at other types of institutions?
- Is there a difference between institutions with/without Carnegie Engagement classifications?

Use Biglan Classification to analyze more recent data
- Nature of faculty work has changed since 2006. How does the next generation of scholars approach their publicly engaged scholarship?
- Do these findings hold true for publicly engaged scholarship conducted by non-tenure track faculty?
- What other disciplinary and sub-disciplinary differences are apparent now (e.g., psych. vs. comm. psych., physical vs. cultural geography)?

What are your thoughts on other implications and future directions?
Acknowledgements

I would like to gratefully acknowledge those who contributed to the completion of this study, including:

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- John H. Schweitzer, Ph.D., who assisted with data coding and analysis
References


References, con’t.


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