

Chapter 10

Innovations and Adjustments in Internship and Field Experience From Non-Traditional For-Profit Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an overview of innovations and adjustments made by for-profit non-traditional education in the areas of recruitment, orientation, use of technology, focusing on the development of the whole person, life-long learners, and leaders, with special emphasis on internships in psychology and counseling. Many of the insights of non-traditional for-profit education have been adopted and incorporated into more traditional campus-based programs. Innovation and adaptation continue to drive progress in internships.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Non-traditional for-profit education emerged to meet the needs of adult learners who, because of time constraints and distance, had limited opportunities to earn a degree from a traditional campus-based program. Learners in psychology and counseling sought an accredited degree that met the requirements of state licensing boards and the expectations of professional organizations in their fields of study. To meet these needs, non-traditional institutions had to be creative and adaptive as accrediting bodies applied the same standards to both non-traditional and traditional universities' programs.

Among the experiences learners reported were frustration that there were few programs that would allow them to continue their full- or part-time jobs and be a learner in a counseling or psychological program that included a practicum and internship. They expressed frustration that some programs required they do practicum or internship in a pre-existing site with a pre-approved supervisor and were reluctant to accept or approve new sites and new supervisors, especially when they were located at a long distance from the university. Some for-profit non-traditional institutions did not provide their online learners with possible internship sites or locations in the different states or locations around the world where they lived. This poses and continues to pose frustration and difficulty for students to complete their psychology or counseling degrees. Some also required internships at the bachelor's level, which is not common practice, thus placing barriers on the non-traditional students to find sites that would allow them to intern at that level.

Prior to the acceptance of video conferencing, new proposed supervisors would have to travel to the university in many cases for a face-to-face interview, often without compensation. The early adapting of video conference by for-profit non-traditional schools changed that and reduced frustration for learners and on-site supervisors. When video conferencing and taping became more widely accepted, first by for-profit non-traditional schools, frustration levels of the learner and the on-site supervisor were reduced. Slowly, more non-profit traditional schools and programs adopted these methods to varying degrees.

A slightly different problem that cause stress and worry for learners was the required classes for interns with a faculty person who was not their on-site supervisor. Learners expressed concerns about maintaining a healthy marriage, relationship with their children and their job. Traditional schools and programs usually held these classes on campus and in the early evening. Traditional programs saw this as a way to maintain oversight and control of quality of the learner and monitor the work of the on-site supervisor.

For-profit non-traditional schools relied on video conferencing and recording for this with review by the coordinator of internship. On-site supervisors expressed

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