

The Model Licensing Act Revisited

By Robert Woody, PhD, JD (<http://www.BobWoodyHelpsPsychology.com>).

A school psychologist wrote recently, saying: “I am looking for greater clarity on your position of whether you would support maintaining the exemption for our nondoctoral colleagues in the MLA or would support removal of any part of this exemption?” Since someone else said to me (I hope in a good natured way) “you have an opinion about everything,” I was at first amused by the request for “greater clarity,” but am certainly pleased to provide an answer to the request.

In my article, “Building Bridges, Avoiding Schisms in School Psychology” (Woody, 2009). I state: “A commitment to conciliatory and collaborative strategies is most apt to bring stability and growth to school psychology” (p. 127). Therefore, I believe that dialogue should continue, especially between APA and NASP. Also, I would underscore that responsible professionalism supports working constructively within the organization (i.e., APA)--I shall not be a “rebel without a cause.”

Having said the foregoing, my personal opinion is that nondoctoral folks, in all specialties (e.g., school psychology), should be embraced and promoted. Accordingly, I am writing a manuscript on multi-level practitioners. The next two paragraphs are excerpted from the DRAFT.

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In the 1960s, federal legislation provided financial stimulation for comprehensive community mental health (CMH) programs. Although funding and society’s priorities shifted to other things in subsequent years, it can be argued that the CMH model contained exceptionally fine qualities, some of which were the products of unique definitions of personnel roles (Lieberman, 1975). For example, Hilleboe and Lemkau (1969) said: “What is suggested is that persons skilled in motivation and in getting along with people, regardless of profession, be assigned the job of human contact . . . [even] nonprofessional ‘health guides’ have been employed successfully” (p. 21). Specifically, it was maintained that a lattice of roles could be climbed as a mental health worker acquired additional training and competencies.

In a career lattice, the worker can move vertically or horizontally—movement is based on training and competency. Swanson and Fouad (2010) point out that career theory indicates that, with essentially everyone, there will potentially be “suitability for a number of different

occupations” (p. 146) and “Career maturity—or readiness to master the developmental tasks of each stage effectively—involves both attitudinal factors and cognitive factors” (p. 147). Since attitudes and cognitions are involved, psychology should, in accord with career development, “structure the career progress of its employees, typically so that they are rewarded with high levels of pay, status, responsibility, and satisfaction as they gain skills and experience” (VandenBos, 2007, p. 148).

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Yes, I am for accommodating nondoctoral school psychologists in the MLA. If the particular jurisdictions chooses to provide statutory codification of the lattice approach, I believe that society, psychology, and APA would benefit.

References

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VandenBos, G. R. (2007). APA dictionary of psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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For additional information, see:

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