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PRAGMATIC MODEL. The pragmatic model of training is one of three master models, the others being the scientist-practitioner model* and the professional model.* The model is termed pragmatic because its essential feature is to take a practical approach to program curriculum development consistent with prescriptive certification* requirements of state departments of education* and the specialist-level standards of the National Association of School Psychologists* (NASP). As a master model, it influences the specific program model developed by individual training programs for school psychologists.* That is, the preparation of school psychologists is directed toward the credentialing requirements of the state in which the school psychology* training program is located. Individual program models vary as a function of the state's expectations.

Whereas the scientist-practitioner and professional models are applicable to doctoral programs, the pragmatic model is most applicable to nondoctoral programs. The pragmatic model is atheoretical and is primarily a descriptive model, whereas the scientist-practitioner and professional models are based on much broader consensus about the nature of preparation in professional psychology. The pragmatic model is heavily influenced by nondoctoral program accreditation* standards promulgated by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education* (NCATE), which are closely aligned with NASP training and credentialing standards and with state education agency credentialing standards. Because nondoctoral programs are restricted in credit-hour requirements, their prescriptive nature reduces their flexibility of orientation or elective course work.

Though restrictive, the pragmatic model is necessary for preparing entry-level school psychologists. As practice expectations expanded, the importance of broad generalist preparation for the entry level has been emphasized in training and accreditation standards. These standards have increased in the past twenty years from the master's* to the specialist degree* level. The doctoral degree* is considered by NASP as an advanced preparation beyond the entry level, in contrast to American Psychological Association* (APA) ideology, which views the doctorate as the entry level.

See also TRAINING MODELS.

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PRECISION TEACHING. Precision teaching (PT) describes a process in which operant conditioning* principles are applied to the teaching and learning process. Although he denies it, Ogden Lindsley is credited with developing PT (Lindsley, 1990). Lindsley, a former student of B. F. Skinner, argues that frequency of behavior should be measured continuously and monitored daily, students should use self-recording, and standard charts should be used to display major changes in academic or social behaviors. Each student is able to progress at his or her own rate, and instruction is thus individualized. Behaviors are charted on a logarithmic scale that communicates rate of learning or "celeration" (Lindsley, 1990, p. 11) and allows for a wide range of behavioral frequencies.

Principles of PT state that student behavior is the best measure of instructional effectiveness, behaviors should be continuously and directly measured, rate of responding is the best measure of behavior, standard charts should display performance, behaviors should be operationally and functionally defined, environmental influences on behavior should be examined, and building appropriate and functional behaviors should be emphasized, rather than the reduction or elimination of undesirable behaviors. Analysis of learning graphs provides feedback to the teacher in adjusting instruction based on objective data.

See also BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION; CURRICULUM-BASED ASSESSMENT; DIAGNOSTIC TEACHING.

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PREREFERRAL ASSESSMENT. Prereferral assessment deals with the process of identifying conditions in the individual and/or in the school that prevent successful learning. The notion of "prereferral," related to this activity, means that the assessment (and prereferral intervention*) occurs prior to formal referral to special education.* The conditions adversely affecting learning may be related to intraindividual factors (e.g., an educational disability, attention difficulties) or may be related to the learning environment (e.g., instructional and social dimensions of the classroom).

Prereferral assessment has been proposed as a solution to the dramatic increase in the number of referrals made to special education since the inception of Public Law 94-142* (Fuchs, 1991).

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