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## Reflecting on Over 100 Years of Public Administration Education

### Abstract

Public administration education has an interesting history rooted in numerous scholarly disciplines, such as sociology, political science, economics, and engineering. The article reflects on the last 100 years of scholarship on public administration education, starting with an article on the topic in the first issue of *Public Administration* in 1923. We provide a concise review focused on the development of public administration education over this time. Next, we discuss scholarship in top journals on public administration education, *Journal of Public Affairs Education* and *Teaching Public Administration*. We use Denhardt's (2001) big questions in public administration education as a framework to examine this scholarship. We conclude by discussing the future of public administration education and advocating a community-based approach to pedagogy practice and research in the field.

### Introduction

Public administration is a field of practice as old as civilization, though it took until the late 1800s for a scholarly discipline to develop. Originally, this scholarly discipline was found in numerous areas, such as political science, sociology, management, and even engineering (Waldo, 1965; Raadschelders, 1999). Today, there is a strong call to consider public administration as a separate and independent academic discipline and field of inquiry (Box 2008; Sarker, 2019; DiStefano, 2019). The evolution of public administration as a field of inquiry is an article, or book, by itself. In this paper, we narrow the focus by examining the connective tissue that link

public administration concepts and practices through multiple academic fields over the years, and this connection is the topic of public administration education.

Since the emergence of public administration as a field of scholarship and practice, there has been a strong emphasis on linking research with practice through education and training. For instance, the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, created in 1907, is an early example of research being applied to public administration through professional training and education in the United States (McDonald, 2010). The UK Institute of Public Administration (and later the Royal Institute of Public Administration, RIPA), was established in 1922 with a focus on improving public administration through training and the enhancement of professional practice in 1922. This represents a significant milestone in the development of UK public administration education and promotion of good practice. The RIPA founded this journal, *Public Administration*, as an academic journal in 1922 with the aim for the journal to be a “a medium both for instruction and enlightenment” (Nottage and Stack, 1972) for public servants and the journal remains one of the leading public administration journals in the field. The Royal Institute was established initially for the UK civil service by the Society of Civil Servants, a trade union, to promote a “national pool of their ideas, to work out techniques of administration, by discussion and papers and so on; to educate themselves and incidentally the public as to what the Civil Service is and does” (Nottage and Stack, 1972). It later came to provide a forum for exchanging ideas for public servants outside the civil service such as those employed in local government. It was largely as a result of financial pressures, that saw the demise of the RIPA in 1992 (Chapman, 1993; Sheley, 1993).

While the emergence of public administration education focused on the laudable goals of professionalism in government, often the early advocates of public administration education

were, as Roberts (2020, p.185) describes, “guided by beliefs about racial superiority and the duty of civilized nations to improve uncivilized peoples through colonization”. Today, there is still tension between public administration education as a field empowering communities and public employees and the field being limited by ideas of private markets and capitalism. Plant (2003, p.560) suggests that early public administration education in the UK was focused on “training young ‘men’ in the ideals of citizenship and the service of the common good. They would enter the service of the state believing the state to be a body with moral purposes, articulating a sense of the common and public good which they would then pursue in a disinterested way”.

On this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the journal *Public Administration*, the oldest scholarly journal in the field, we trace the evolution of public administration education. This journey starts with an article published in the inaugural issue of *Public Administration*. The title of the article is “The Teaching of Public Administration in U.S.A” by Gibbon (1923). It is one of the first scholarly treatments specifically examining public administration education. Public administration is often too focused on the United States, and as can be seen through the title, this early article on education in the field suffers from this problem. However, the author compares public administration education in the U.S. with the field in UK and argues that in the U.S., a strong education in public administration was needed because the country lacked the professional bureaucracy of the U.K. civil service. Beyond this starting point, the article then discusses examples of public administration education, including courses delivered by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research.

The lack of a discussion by Gibbon (1923) on academic programs at universities is telling. In the early 1900s, few academic programs dedicated specifically to public administration existed. The MPA as a degree offered in many universities would come later. In

the UK, the RIPA was keen to develop links with universities to establish academic qualifications. To this end, the Diploma of Public Administration was established as a joint venture with the University of London in 1929 (Nottage and Stack, 1972). Syracuse University in the U.S. had yet to create their public administration programs, some of the first in the nation and throughout the world. Fast forward to the 2020s and the MPA is a common degree at universities in the U.S., U.K., and internationally. The field's main accreditation association, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), has academic programs as members from across the world (NASPAA, n.d.). In contrast, in the UK Masters awards are accredited by universities themselves following a rigorous validation process. In this paper, we trace the development of public administration over the past hundred years, and we discuss what public administration as a field learned along the way. Lastly, we offer reflections on the future of public administration and why we need to focus on education in our field in order to support public servants and their organizations address local and global challenges.

### **History of Public Administration Education**

In the US, public administration education started mostly in research and training centers created by governments, like the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. Universities realized the need for programs in public administration and introduced courses, and degrees such as the Master of Public Administration became more commonplace throughout the U.S. (McDonald, 2010; McDonald, Hatcher, and Abbott, Forthcoming). The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) formed and served as a meeting place for public administration practitioners and scholars. NASPAA formed as a part of ASPA and then separated to have a special focus on the education side of public administration and affairs education (McDonald, Hatcher, and Abbott, Forthcoming).

In the UK, Chapman, (1972, 10) highlights that during the interwar years, the delivery of courses which featured the “study of public administration in the light of history and of the social sciences, to relate its problems to the wider problems of society, and to teach students how to think for themselves about the work of administration” were the priorities. According to Chandler (2002), this led to the establishment of the UK Joint Universities Council for Social and Public Administration in 1947 and to the setting up of a Diploma in Public Administration (DPA) in 17 different universities. The DPA was adapted by local authorities to create a Diploma in Municipal Administration (DMA) and this qualification was identified in the Mallaby Report (1967) as essential for those employed in local authorities directly from school. Chandler (2002, p. 376) argues that because of the interest in management theory in the 1960s, ‘administration’ was undermined by the concept of ‘management’ as the “key organizing principle while administration was to be applied to more routine tasks of implementation. A gradual intrusion of ‘management’ as opposed to ‘administration’ as an acceptable term to describe the process of organizing and goal setting for public as well as private controlled activities began to insidiously filter into both government and academic thinking”.

Whilst public administration courses and degrees remained in place in the UK up to 1992, the growing interest and desire to improve public service on the part of politicians led the drive to ‘New Public Management’ (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994). Boyne (1996) suggests that one of the key comparisons between public administration and public management is the central driver – public administration is concerned with politics and public management with economics. Similarly, Barberis (2012, p. 342) argues that whilst “public administration was located within a constitutional and democratic embrace that both gave shape and set standards for proper functioning, management has no such bearings” and therefore could be shaped by

government policies. Historically, the UK's system of public administration was widely recognized, and this was adopted in many countries, particularly those in the Commonwealth.

Public administration education has a long history at both undergraduate and post graduate level in the UK. At the undergraduate level, Jones's (2012) argument that whilst "degrees in Public Administration have disappeared, the academic discipline remains. The subject matter has moved on" (Jones, 2012, p. 130). Degrees in Public Administration were historically offered in approximately 7 universities but by the early 1990s, many of these had disappeared with a shift into areas of public policy and management or politics (Fenwick and McMillan, 2014) with 'public administration' not viewed as an attractive degree for full time students. It is at the postgraduate level that UK public administration academic awards continue to exist, and in many universities, these prosper attracting aspiring middle and senior public service leaders. There are MPA Masters courses in many universities and in others, similar awards are offered such as the MSc Public Management or the MSc in Public Leadership (or the MSc Public Management and Leadership). Typically, these courses are taken up by middle and senior leaders and managers in a range of services right across the public and the third sector and are all part time and mainly (but not always) attract 'local' students. In addition to part time awards, there are some on-line courses and others which are 'blended' combining on-line with some 'in-person' elements of delivery.

In terms of the curriculum, whether in public administration or public management, this focus of the curriculum has drifted. This drift was frequently over differences of opinion on professionalism, with some arguing that public administration education should be concerned with managerial skills or principles of public administration (Stone, 1948) and others arguing that pedagogy in the field should promote citizenship and democratic administration (Cooper and

Gulick, 1984). Debates also surrounded other values and goals of public administration education. In particular, the field has debated a focus on efficiency (e.g., in the New Public Management view of the field) versus social equity. In recent decades, following the leadership of George Frederickson and the New Public Administration (Dubnick, et al., 2021; White, 2020; Davis, Moldavanove, and Stazyk, 2020), public administration scholarship in the US has focused on social equity in teaching and learning scholarship.

Conversely, in the UK, the new governance has been prominent as public administration has shifted from public management to public governance (Rhodes, 1997) whilst in all Universities, retaining the public administration and management titles. There have been a number of longer term consequences for the PA field in the UK as a result of these developments: a perceived lack of distinctiveness with respect to PA being ‘different from ‘ public management or public policy and so leading to a blurring of the academic and epistemological boundaries separating these domains; a decline in the number of programmes at all levels grounded in PA; a vulnerability to the status of the field and its associated academic representative bodies; and a questioning by other disciplines whether PA speaks to the contemporary challenges faced by public and civic institutions and professions working at the local level. This latter development is, perhaps, best exemplified by the field of social work. All of these different elements separately or in combination have represented (and continue so to do) significant challenges for the wider PA community not least that university departments provide a ‘home’ for subject disciplines or fields of study which facilitate the sustainability of disciplines. In the UK, the story of the past 30 – 40 years has been one of the PA communities needing to adapt and adopt different strategies or continue to decline.



In the late 1990s, NASPAA's scholarly publication, *Journal of Public Affairs Education*<sup>1</sup> (JPAAE), started strongly emphasizing social equity in education. A search of the journal returned 265 articles including the phrase 'social equity'. With some of the articles, like "Taking Social Equity Seriously in MPA Education" by Rosenbloom (2005) and "Social Equity is a Pillar of Public Administration" by Svava and Brunet (2005) being foundational papers on the importance of social equity in public service allocation and delivery systems and how to incorporate the concept into public administration teaching and also research. The rich literature on social equity has led to recent articles creating detailed guides to integrating social equity into public administration education (Berry-James et al., 2020).

While public administration has moved toward a separate field for close to a hundred years, some would argue that the field still has an identity crisis in which the goal is unclear and in fact that the field should not be a distinct discipline (Rutgers, 1998; Farazmand, 2012; Hafer, 2016). There has been a focus on professionalism, democratic governance, market mechanisms, social equity and many other goals for public administration. When it comes to professionalism of public administration education as a goal, some even argue that the field has oversimplified what it means to be a profession (Green, Wamsley and Keller, 1993) and others argue that professionalism in educational efforts should focus on ethical administration (Bowman, 1998). The debate over professionalism and education is important with arguments centering on the need to focus on training skills while others argue for a more theoretical education rooted in learning concepts and allowing for practice or experiential learning on the job. It should be stressed that public administration education in the U.S. was first a response by the Progressive

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<sup>1</sup> In the US context, the term "public affairs" describes public administration but also public policy and nonprofit management. Overall, the field of public administration in the US has taken a holistic approach including policy and nonprofit studies under the umbrella term of public affairs.

Movement to the political corruption and a call by reformers to focus on managerial tools, such as budgeting, staffing, planning, and so forth (Ventriss, 1991; Stivers, 2002). However, as noted, over time, public administration has branched out from this early focus toward being a concern with promoting social equity, protecting constitutional institutions and an overall general concern on educating public servants not just managers.

Thus, the evolution of public administration education is not a straight road from point A to point B, but rather a complicated network of various schools of thought, definitions, and pedagogical approaches. To identify the progress of the subject of public administration over the last 100 years, we present public administration education's evolution into the following issues. Note that this discussion starts with a focus on public administration education in the U.S., the UK and expands to a more comparative and global focus.

### **Themes in Public Administration Education**

When examining themes of public administration education, we need a useful framework guide the discussion. Denhardt (2001) constructed such a framework by identifying what he viewed as the 'big questions' facing public administration education. The questions are:

1. Do we seek to educate our students with respect to theory or to practice?
2. Do we prepare students for their first jobs or for those to which they might?
3. What are the appropriate delivery mechanisms for MPA courses and curricula?
4. What personal commitments do we make as public administration educators? (Denhardt, 2001, p.526).

The next section of the paper examines the pedagogy-based research on these big questions in the *JPAE* and *Teaching Public Administration* (TPA), the field's two top scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) journals.

### **Theory and/or Practice**

A consistent theme throughout public administration in general is the issue of connecting theory and practice. For instance, a search of the *JPAE* returned over 700 results for articles dealing with theory and/or practice. Many of those articles focus on ensuring that both theory and practice are well-represented in the curricula of public affairs programs. Broadnax (1997) made the case for 'embracing theory and practice' through emphasis on how both sides are relevant to students in MPA programs. There is a suggestion that coursework undertaken by students needs to include discussions on theory and practice that illustrate the relevance of both to the careers of students. Denhardt et al (1997) presented the University of Delaware's approach of integrating basic and theory-based research being conducted by traditional faculty with applied research being conducted by community outreach centers. By involving students in both endeavors, they gain an appreciation of the importance of both theory and practice. Maheshwari (2006) highlights that in India, whilst the recruitment of civil servants is focused on those with a range of degree subjects, when it comes to postgraduate training, this is more subject specific and centers on the practice of public administration. In a review of mid-career master programs in PA in the Netherlands, van der Meer and Marks (2018) make the case for designing programs which address the complexities of contemporary society (climate change and migration to illustrate two) and how this might lead to a reframing of the PA curriculum to better prepare civil servants and public officials. The importance of a multidisciplinary approach is developed by Lucio, Almeida and Silveira (2018) in the examination of Brazil's public service. As Dunning

(2019, p.129) observes, the global challenges offered by economic choices as well as regulatory changes and political tensions heightened by polarizing policies “have an impact on public servants at all levels of government”.

How do public affairs programs do when it comes to teaching the connections between theory and practice? The public administration research on theory and practice includes survey research which includes the opinions of faculty members, practitioners, and students in public administration. Wood and Kickham (2021, p.1) report the results of a survey of public administrators and students asking their viewpoints on “reality” and “ideal” issues surrounding theories of public administration. They found students to have differing viewpoints on the “reality” items in their survey, indicating disconnect between theory and practice. In another survey, polling academics and practitioners, demonstrates key differences between these two groups, a continued disconnect between theory and practice in our field (Ancira, Rangarajan, and Shields, 2021).

Throughout our research, there is an assumption in the literature that theory and practice should be connected in public administration education. Hummel (1997) suggests that theory is most useful for practitioners when there is a failure of administration. Moreover, in order to develop theory and have effective practice, Hummel (1997) further argues that students of public administration need to recognize the limitations of theory for scholarship for it to be useful. In recent years, researchers examining issues of public administration education focused on ensuring theory is useful to practice. Perry (2020) discussed a guide to help public administration programs and faculty teach public service motivation to their students. Another example is how Kapucu and Hu (2020) constructed a guide to integrated network governance theory into public administration curricula and programs. Guy’s (2020) work makes the case for public

administration education to focus interpersonal relationships as much as rationality in decision-making. In addition, Overton and Kleinschmit (2021) recently argued for theory on data science to be connected to practice by using public administration students practice data literacy.

While a great deal of the literature as discussed as focusing on connecting theory and practice, some of the focus in the scholarly journals on public administration education has been on how this is done in the classroom. For instance, a key part of many public administration programmes is the need to apply theoretical material within practice using case studies such as those produced by the Kennedy School of Government and Syracuse University in the US and Oxford University's Blavatnic Case Centre in the UK. It is also the case that universities and those working in the practice of public administration have strong links which bring the world of theory and practice to life (Diamond and Liddle, 2012).

Within the UK, there is a history of public administration education which focused on the values which are central to effective public administration. With their initial paper focused on the public service ethos (Stewart and Clarke, 1987) and later papers by Rayner et al (2010), centered on the ethics of 'good public administration', these continue to feature in public administration education. For example, since UK devolution in 1999, the Welsh government has put in place a set of values collectively called the 'one Welsh Public service' which seek to ensure that public servants, regardless of sector or service, focus on these in their daily working lives. These values include a focus on citizens, working for the long term, collaborative working and integrated public services, for example, (Academi Wales). These values map closely on to a unique piece of legislation in Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, 2015 to guide public servants working right across different services in Wales to ensure that their actions consider and value the impact of decisions taken now on future generations (Farrell and Law, 2020).

Most of the literature on theory and practice discussed so far have been studies from JPAE. Next, we like to the literature on this important topic in the journal TPA. The journal was established in 1972 in one of the seven universities offering a full time BA (Hons) Public Administration award. The decision to launch TPA represents a commitment not just to the field or discipline of PA in the UK at that point but, more significantly, this represented the establishment of a journal which focused exclusively on the pedagogical issues raised by the teaching, learning, scholarship and the application of research back into the field the field. Some of the early papers in the journal had been presented at the annual Public Administration Committee conference organised by the UK Joint University Council. Arguably, and perhaps contentiously, it is through the teaching of PA which sustains the discipline in ways which research does not. Initially published by one of the 7 universities, the journal was taken on by Sage Publishers Ltd in 2012. Between 1972 and 2012, the journal reflected the declining strength of the discipline in UK universities as a separate and confident field of scholarship and research.

A review of the papers over the last 45 years suggests that theory and practice are recurring themes in TPA alongside attempts to understand and make sense of institutional and structural reforms of government especially at local and regional levels as well research methods, executive education, the teaching – research nexus and the reflexive manager. In an essay for TPA, Fenwick (2018) selected 35 papers from the TPA archive covering the period 1996 – 2016. His concluding comments include the following: “a review of this period reveals immense patterns of change with regard to what public administration is, what administrators do, what constitutes the ‘public’ element, whether administrators have become managers and, whether at the end of all of this, there remain any fundamental differences at all between the public and the private spheres” (Fenwick 2018, p. 11). In looking at the range and breadth of the 125 papers

published since 2012 and the 26 (at the time of writing) waiting to be published, it is possible to observe several important and broader trends which suggest the enhancement of the status of pedagogical scholarship and research in public administration.

Whilst in the TPA archive prior to 2012 it is possible to identify several papers with an international focus to them, this is a clear development post 2012. There is an important shift away from often UK academics writing *about* PA in global settings to academics writing from their informed perspectives about changes and developments in their settings. Between 2012 – 2021, TPA published five special issues (out of 27) and four of these were either led by or included a global or international set of insights and thinking. This development has three important implications for TPA as well as those working in the UK context: firstly, that conventional wisdoms about the health or decline of PA may actually be UK centric conclusions; secondly, the idea of knowledge transfer or exchange may be one which is the opposite of received models of learning and curriculum design and that the UK may benefit from listening and reflecting more; and finally, journals need to ensure that all their systems and processes reflect a diverse and global context in terms of editorial and journal leadership, reviewers and guidance. It might be too much of a stretch to conclude that in the UK public administration context, we can observe a reversal of the flow of analysis, critical thinking about PA, curriculum design and adapting PA to the challenges of the present from the UK leading on these questions to the UK PA community (very broadly defined) learning from the global community of scholars and practitioners.

The linkages between theory and practice are central to the papers or special issues referred to above which have been published in TPA since 2012. In particular, ideas of practice based on liberal democratic values and institutions are open to challenge not only in a neo-liberal

context but one where parliamentary systems are less well developed and vulnerable or where the global challenges post 2008 have placed pressure on these systems. For those involved and committed to curriculum development, these challenges can act as a stimulus to ask the core questions about what the underpinning assumptions are about designing a PA programme. The claim that theory can inform practice and the other way around necessitates a much closer relationship between practitioners and PA scholars and researchers and one which is open to creating a shared opportunity for learning and application. It is these spaces of engagement that it is possible to see whether the PA curriculum is intended to prepare for employment and promotion or to support individuals in choosing a role which can add value to the community in which they live and work.

### **Career Preparation**

Career preparation is an often discussed and studied topic in both JPAE and TPA. Some studies and essays focus on developing the curriculum for in preparation for careers. For example, Williams, Plein, and Lilly (1998) detailed how the MPA program at West Virginia University utilized career portfolios to help students plan their career routes and to provide evidence of their skills, assets, and experience to potential employers. Research in the teaching public administration literature also examines student preferences regarding what they want public affairs programs to do to help advance their career goals (Henderson and Chetkovich, 2014). Vogel (2021) argued for public administration faculty to stress the field as a vocation focused on public service, and when preparing them for their careers, the public service ethos should be stressed along with career-related items, such as job placement, salary, and other extrinsic issues. The context of public services, reflecting key values was a central part of the



first all Wales public service graduate programme launched by the Welsh Government in 2018 and continue to be prominent (Farrell and Hicks, 2020).

Typically, students on post graduate programmes in public administration and related areas such as public management and leadership are senior middle managers seeking to take the next step into public service leadership or those who are seeking a management / leadership qualification to support their current roles. Students are most likely to be taking the course on a part time basis and in full time employment in a public service focused role. Reflecting on the experiences of the authors with over 60 years of education experience between them, public administration programmes are frequently successful in terms of participants gaining promotions whilst on the courses.

### **Program Delivery**

The literature on public administration education focuses on the overall design of academic programs and the delivery mode of courses. The program design literature examines challenges of academic programs in public affairs and what needs to be addressed in the curricula of the programs (Evans, Morrison and Auer, 2019). Additionally, the literature covers challenges and opportunities facing the faculty leaders of public administration programs (Brainard, 2017; Killian and Wenning, 2017), not least challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic (McDonald, 2021). In contrast to the UK, in recent years, there has been an increase in public affairs at the undergraduate level in the U.S. (Weber and Brunt, 2020), a trend covered in the literature on the delivery of public administration programs. At the undergraduate level, courses are mostly full-time and in contrast, at the postgraduate level, courses are part time with regular weekly sessions, block delivery or online sessions. Lastly, and perhaps the most prevalent literature in this area, are studies examining the delivery of public administration

courses, traditional face-to-face courses compared to distance education and online. For instance, in JPAE, there are over 350 articles referencing online education. Research shows little difference in student opinion of technology issues comparing online and in-person online learning, even in challenging areas such as research methods (Ni et al., 2021; Ni, 2013; Ginn and Hammond, 2012). A concern of research has also focus on accessibility in online (Dolamore, 2021) and even using telepresence robots to deliver online courses (Rinfret, 2020). On-line delivery has been the practice across the world during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is suggested that some of this delivery will remain in place once restrictions ease. However, on-line delivery can be controversial where “differences in how students learn can be exacerbated in an online environment (McDonald, 2021, p.4). Further, as evidenced by Yaghi’s (2021) recent research, “when compared with the pre-COVID-19 situation, students reported experiencing higher levels of anxiety and stress” as a result of the “impact of involuntary and prolonged online education” (p. 1).

### **Personal Commitments**

The last ‘big question’ of public administration education identified by Denhardt (2001) focuses the commitment of faculty in our field. Denhardt (2001) discussed a need to examine how we develop faculty as professionals so they can improve their craft of teaching and their successes as researchers. As with the other big questions, the public administration educator literature in JPAE and TPA has explored the topic of faculty development, with concern often paid to mentoring and work-life balance. In fact, JPAE published an entire issue dedicated to the issue of work-life balance in public affairs programs – for example, see Pautz and Vogel (2020) and other articles in the special issue. A few examples of literature on personal commitment issues include an article by Fountain and Newcomer (2018), which presents a plan for mentoring

faculty in public affairs, and a study by Pautz and Vogel (2020), in which the authors applied the theory of public service motivation to the problem of work-life balance among faculty members.

Interestingly, whilst in the UK the concern over the work-life balance is a more recent development, there is the complimentary dimension of this which is the merging of the personal and the professional. It is possible to observe this in the UK in two different contexts. Firstly, the growth in significance of reflexive practice across all public fields of study and with it the emerging focus on developing skills of listening, empathy, and support towards service users. Secondly, the ways in which the recording, auditing and allocation of resources have all increased so that it is not just the quality of research that matters but also student satisfaction and knowledge exchange partnerships. In both these developments, it is possible to see increased strain and stress on individuals and institutions. In the UK, these stresses are not just related to PA scholars but much more broadly across public services and public service scholars and researchers (Kagan and Diamond 2019).

### **Beyond Denhardt's Big Questions in PA Education**

While the areas surrounding Denhardt's (2001) big questions in public administration are important, there are two crucial areas left unexamined, the importance of social equity and the significance of the political context. Regarding social equity, the literature on teaching public administration holds a wealth of scholarship on it and how to integrate the concept into academic programs. In recent years, JPAE has held two symposia on the topic and its significance in teaching public administration.

Regarding the political context, whilst public administration programmes right across the world emphasise key aspects around values and equity, for example, the curriculum in these

areas is likely to be influenced by the politics within which courses are set. In fact, courses will adapt to the political context within which they are being delivered. In the context of a ‘right wing’ government, for example, the concept of equity itself within the public administration curriculum would be re-framed and have a different focus from that delivered within a ‘left wing’ political context. Similarly, public administration awards delivered in a democratic society are likely to be very different from those in an autocracy. Clearly, the values upon which programmes are based are politically likely to be politically defined. The political context of public administration education is therefore significant in relation to the content of the curriculum.

### **The Future of Public Administration Education**

We titled this article to emphasize that our discussion represented a reflection of over a hundred years of public administration education and not a detailed history. Through our discussion, we have traced the development of public administration education in the U.S. and U.K. This is not to dismiss the important contributions to public administration in other national contexts, such as Continental Europe, Korea, Japan, Australia and throughout the world. From looking at the U.S. and U.K. contexts, we identified crucial questions of public administration education and how the literature on scholarship and teaching seeks to answer these questions. Next, we would like to build on these questions and discuss the future of public administration education. One of us (Hatcher, 2020) has argued for extending Denhardt’s (2001) questions of public administration education to include the following:

1. How do we teach our students to convince the public about the virtues of democracy?
2. How do we teach fairness and social equity?

3. How do we teach the importance of evidence in making decisions?
4. How do we teach the dangers of emphasizing individualism at the expense of the community when facing crises?
5. How do we teach about the relevance of the political context of policy making?

To answer these questions, we need to first adjust to the norm of constant crises. Thus, the sixth question would be, how do we teach public affairs and public administration when the government is always in crisis?

Our aim is to build on these questions and construct a research agenda and a sketch of vital material and concepts to be emphasized in the classroom for public administration education going forward. Such a research agenda needs to focus on descriptive and normative features of public administration education.

First, research needs to advance how we in the profession can teach students the importance of democratic virtues. Recent research by Gaynor and Carrizales (2018) makes the case for the teaching of democratic ideals in public affairs programs. In their review of syllabi from public affairs programs, the authors found limited instruction on the importance of democracy and the features of democratic governance. We agree with the authors in their call for the field to focus more on promoting democracy in our public administration and public affairs classrooms.

To accomplish this, programs need to examine the importance of equity and fairness to the work being done by public administrators. As discussed earlier in this article, the journals in

the field dedicated to public administration education (TPA and JPAE) are taking the lead in promote social equity and fairness. For example, searching JPAE for ‘social equity’ returns 268 articles, with foundational manuscripts on social equity. Many of the articles discuss the importance of social equity and a number focus on how to teach the concept in the classroom (see Gooden and Wooldridge, 2007). An important strand of this paper has been the references to the ways in which not just this journal but also JPAE and TPA have reflected the debates and discussions within the field. We can see the journals as neutral vessels into which papers and scholarly pieces are offered up for publication. Alternatively, we can recognize that the journals themselves are part of this history, tradition, and practice. The members of editorial boards and the roles they have does matter, as does who is asked to peer review or who is supported (such as early career researchers) by institutions. The composition, diversity and geography of the boards attached to journals and their editors are also part of this discussion.

Next, while promoting democracy, social equity, and fairness are vital to ensure public administration protects democratic institutions, public administration education also needs to advance research on the importance of evidence-based decision-making. This resource focus is even more important in the era of ‘Alternative Facts’ and the influence of ideas against bureaucracy that became even more damaging during the Trump Administration in the U.S. The increase of far-right governments throughout the world makes it crucial that public administration education is teaching current and future public administrators to make efficient and effective decisions rooted in evidence. The learning outcomes and competencies established by the field’s accrediting bodies, such as NASPAA, help ensure a focus on evidence in administration. We need to expand that in scholarship on public administration education. For

instance, JPAE and TPA have only published a limited number of articles specifically examining “evidence-based” public administration and policy.

The focuses on democracy, equity, and evidence needs to be linked to the importance of community, and in public administration classrooms and scholarship, emphasis needs to be placed on the need to solve public problems and challenges through collective action in order to protect individual rights and even the health of individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, right across the world that that individual responsibility in public health does not fully protect communities; rather, the collective action of government is needed to ensure public health policies are followed. By focusing on the importance of the community in public affairs education and scholarship, we can demonstrate to our students that many of the actions need to protect communities are collective in nature. And by doing so, we can continue advance public administration education toward focusing on the public good, improving our communities and enhancing public service outcomes for all citizens.

One possible consequence of COVID 19 is that it has speeded up the broader public conversation about the role of government (Young, Wiley, and Searing, 2020). Public Administration, both as a profession and a field of study or discipline, reflects this central dilemma: what is the role of public services and the appropriate role of public servants (at all levels of government)? Before the COVID pandemic, it seemed as if the notion that well supported, qualified, experts and professionals with a commitment to public institutions and services were an anachronism: society’s needs could be met by markets or the non-governmental sector. COVID-19 has illustrated the need for a public infrastructure to support society and to provide expert guidance in times of crisis. It is already interesting to see the number of papers coming through both JPAE and TPA focused on the implications of the pandemic for the

curriculum and what this might mean for reassessing some previously held assumptions about the role and size of government and the extent to which an independent public service was possible. McDonald's (2021, p.5) argument that "maintaining an essentialist perspective on public administration education is successful when society is functioning well, but how prepared are our students when society is unstable and the organizations they oversee deviate from the norm?" is especially relevant to faculty as they move forward.

### **Conclusion**

Reflecting on 100 years of public administration education, this paper has identified key themes associated with teaching and learning including the focus on social equity and the significance of the political context. The shift in many countries from public administration to public management led to changes within the curriculum, in both undergraduate and postgraduate awards. Whilst the titles of some public administration courses may have changed, the curriculum retains its emphasis on public service values, the relevance of theory into practice, the significance of research into learning and the importance of education for the enhancement of improved outcomes for citizens across the world.

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Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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