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Historical and Conceptual Underpinnings of Leadership Development Programs: A Quest for Roots

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Recent and persistent scrutiny of education and of schooling has prompted similar attention to educational leadership and the training of leaders. This concern has in

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part fostered an infusion of federal funding of state based training programs for educational administrators (LEAD programs). These new programs can best be understood within an historical and a conceptual context. This paper will provide a brief, exploratory overview of the historical development of educational leadership training. Following this discussion, a commentary on some of the conceptual changes in professional development as evidenced in current LEAD programs will be presented with some ideas on how to think about professional development in the present period.

An historical analysis of school administration and the types of training important at different periods is found in Tyack and Hansot's *Managers of Virtue* (1982). They posit several important themes in educational administration. These historical themes are: (1) the view of school leadership as a "calling" included as part of a millenial discourse describing a vision of the purpose of education in a democracy; (2) school leadership as a "gospel of efficiency," with "professional" experts conveying business imagery, prescribing traits and behaviors that act to conserve a wide set of traditional values and economies; (3) school leadership as culture building in a crisis setting reflecting conflicting contextual demands. More recently, a fourth "avatar" appears to be emerging in current expectations for the school leader, one which focuses on technology, of leadership of the instructional core (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986).

Each of the themes in the history of school leadership potentially suggests a complementary form of training. In the early nineteenth century common school movement, the mission was to communicate Anglo/Saxon values and a set of homogenized principles in an effort to convert the Midwest and West to the Protestant gospel of Eastern law and order. Tyack and Hansot (1982) refer to these reformers as "evangelists of education" who were seeking national "standardization and quality of schooling." (p. 31)

During the post Civil War period, the revivalist imagery seemed to merge with the theology of the "Gilded Age" and the rationale for the factory model for schooling. Scientific management as revealed by Taylor was explicated by the classic authors of early administrative training texts by Cubberly, Bobbit, and Strayer (Hansot and Tyack, 1982). The emphasis, and no doubt, the training was focused on management, efficiency, and standardization.

In the 1920s and 1930s the early rhetoric of scientific management and Taylor's separation of performance and planning was tempered by the research of the "human relations movement" and the influence of behavioral science through the work of Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dixon and interpretations by Follet and others. An emphasis on "coordination," planning by the group, and the concept of democratic leadership recognized the influential role of principals and the power of the informal organization. The themes of this concept of leadership revived more intensely in the 1960s and 70s in response to social–psychological theory which encouraged training in group process, democratic decision making and "organizational development." Here training often focused on group dynamics, the communication of feelings, and the ability to work cooperatively with others.

While the "human relations" theme continues to influence contemporary administrative thought and training, the influence of organizational theory has been instrumental in generating new frameworks for the understanding of administration. The work of Barnard (1938), Simon (1945), and Parsons (1937) established the theoretical assumptions for social systems theory applied to educational administration training (see Getzels, Lipham, and Campbell, 1968). The

legacy of this social systems framework is an extensive literature on change theory and staff development which characterizes the interests of the late 1970s and 1980s.

The reliance on organizational imagery continues to affect the training of educational leaders. Weick's (1976) concept of "loose coupling" reaffirmed the need to look beyond traditional theories of planning and control. However, recent research on school culture while building on studies of corporations (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Deal and Peterson, 1988) has identified new ways of merging managerial and leadership tasks, of viewing work as both instrumental and expressive, technically based and value driven, thus suggesting additional training directions.

Synthesizing this information presents the challenge to practice and training; how to achieve a new agenda for training school and district leaders within current frameworks. The plethora of new forms of preparation, training, and renewal may mirror this challenge.

The result of the changing emphasis from management to leadership at school and district levels has been an increasing focus on problem-solving skills and building more sophisticated frameworks for enacting leadership. Universities now share the responsibility for training with local in-service programs, professional associations, state programs, and principal academies, and, more recently, the federally funded LEAD programs.

The early prescriptive beliefs about the nature of educational leadership and the professional development that would foster that leadership have changed into a more diverse and complex set of ideas about the importance of the duality in managerial tasks and leadership actions and of the influence of diverse school and district contexts on the appropriate pattern of leadership actions. This more diverse set of beliefs is found in the expanding approaches taken by the LEAD programs described in this volume.

Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

The historical and social orientations of any period of time provide the backdrop for what happens in various organizations. There seems little doubt that the opportunities for professional development of educators have, over time, reflected the availability of resources, beliefs about leadership, goals held for schools, and knowledge of effective training. The present period, as reflected in the myriad of training opportunities, represents an especially supportive and conceptually rich time for those who receive and those who provide professional development.

We know much more now than when Wagstaff and Mc-Collough (1973) wrote of in-service training as "education's disaster area." As Pitner (1987), Barnett (1987), and those in this volume note, professional development is more successful when it is sequential, cumulative, and involves longterm learning activities; when it allows participants to help identify their training needs; when there are norms of improvement among participants and collegial problem solving, reflection, and collaborative learning are used; when there is a match of activities and learning styles; and, finally, when the learning provides a variety of skills, knowledge, and self-reflection. With attention to designing learning situations with these and other features of effective professional development, LEAD and other programs will continue to improve the quality and support the professionalism of administrators leading our schools.

But the recent increase in the number and quality of administrative training programs has raised some interesting conceptual issues for the present historical period. For discussion purposes these have been grouped into (1) Conceptions of Training, (2) Conceptions of Content, and (3) Conceptions of Participants. The LEAD programs nationwide are experimenting with new ways of thinking about and structuring professional development, sometimes with new concepts, sometimes with new combinations of traditional approaches.

Conceptions of Training

Beliefs about administrative training seem to be changing. The California LEAD and school leadership academies (CSLA) have shaped successful programs that blend theory and practice, individual and group work, learning about school culture building and building a culture of development using extensive follow-up and conceptually rich materials. The use of pre-training assessment instruments and activities in Florida, Kansas, Washington, New Jersey, and other states have helped reconceptualize the ways diagnosis is applied prior to professional development. Programs in Wisconsin, Louisiana, and Michigan are refocusing training on school academic improvement, not just improvement of individual administrators. And, places like Colorado and Missouri are seriously working with problems faced by rural school administrators and those in distant corners of the state with structural or programmatic activities for leaders in these settings. These and other LEAD programs in this volume represent some changes in the ways training is conceived, with attention to finding new, more effective structures and programs.

Conceptions of Content

Programs of leadership development seem also to be reconceptualizing content. For example, more programs are presenting specific theoretical models of school change or leadership and shaping training around those models. Other academies are focusing not only on skills, but also helping school and district leaders probe their own educational values and beliefs in an effort to increase personal knowledge of the underpinnings of their leadership. In general, the content of training has expanded considerably from communicating feedback to building successful culture-shaping traditions, from assessing one's educational beliefs to diagnosing the learning styles of teachers, from making the master schedule to fostering master teachers.

Concepts of Participants

Finally, LEAD academies and training programs around the country have developed changing conceptions of participants, changes that make it possible to assess more accurately the needs and abilities of administrators and their opportunities for growth. For example, Washington state and others are taking the career stage of participants into consideration when designing programs. Some programs vary the form of training to reach administrators with different styles of learning.

The "learner unit" is also being redefined. No longer is the individual practitioner the sole unit for training. Increasingly LEAD programs such as those in California, Missouri, and Texas are viewing networks of administrators as the "learning unit." Collaboration with businesses and various administrator associations has changed the conception of who is to be included in the development activities (Texas and others are doing this).

Finally, many programs are understanding the importance of the problems that are school site-specific and contextually rooted so that development activities are designed to view administrators as connected to the historical, cultural, educational, and district context. Here, participants

are redefined as inextricably tied to the school or district they lead and programs designed to attend to the diverse demands on leaders.

The articles in this volume describe an increasingly complex and dispersed institution in education (professional development for administrators) that is experimenting with new ideas and creative recombinations of existing approaches. The articles that follow should provide the beginnings of an important new dialogue about the nature, structure, and purpose of administrator training in the United States.

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