ISSN No.
0146-9283

Fall
2005

educational considerations

published at kansas state university college of education

WE'RE ONLINE!

Your subscription to Educational Considerations is now available online.

YOU HAVE CHOICES!!!

#1: Continue to receive paper copy at your regular subscription price.

#2: Receive BOTH paper and electronic copy at your regular subscription price.

#3: Receive ONLY ELECTRONIC copy at 80% of regular subscription price.

To get your online password, e-mail us at thomsond@ksu.edu. Tell us in your e-mail whether you want paper AND electronic copy, or whether you want only electronic copy.

VISIT US AT:

http://coe.ksu.edu/EdConsiderations/

educational considerations

Vol. XXXIII, Number 1, Fall 2005

Available online at:
http://coe.ksu.edu/EdConsiderations/

BOARD OF EDITORS
Chad Litz
Kansas State University
David C. Thompson
Kansas State University
R. Craig Wood
University of Florida
G. Daniel Harden
Washburn University

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Faith E. Crampton
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
Mary Hammel
Assistant to the Editor, Kansas State University

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Donald J. D'Elia
State University of New York–New Paltz
Patrick B. Forsyth
Oklahoma State University
William Fowler
National Center for Educational Statistics
Janis M. Hagey
National Education Association
William Hartman
Pennsylvania State University
Marilyn Hirth
Purdue University
Richard King
University of Northern Colorado
Martha McCarthy
Indiana University
Mary McKeown-Moak
MGT of America, Inc.
F. Howard Nelson
American Federation of Teachers
Allan Odden
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Margaret L. Plecki
University of Washington
Catherine Sielke
University of Georgia
William E. Sparkman
University of Nevada-Reno
Julie Underwood
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Deborah A. Verstegen
University of Nevada–Reno
James G. Ward
University of Illinois–Champaign-Urbana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Guest Editor: Teresa Northern Miller

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for the Simultaneous Renewal of a School District and its Partner University 4
Meredith Mountford

Training Principals to Ensure Access to Equitable Learning Opportunities in a High-Need Rural School District 9
Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Robert C. Knoeppel

"The Earth Is Not Flat Anymore": Reflections on the Impact of a Rural/Urban Educational Leadership Exchange on Place-Based Instruction 16
Cynthia J. Norris with the Graduate Studies Cohort

Portfolio Analysis: Documenting the Progress and Performance of Educational Administration Students 24
Teresa Northern Miller and Trudy Salsberry

Commentary
Online Learning in Secondary Education: A New Frontier 42
Simone Conceição and Sarah B. Drummond

Educational Considerations invites subscribers for only **$13.00**. ***Educational Considerations*** is published and funded by the College of Education at Kansas State University. Write to EDITOR, Bluemont Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506 or call (785) 532-5543.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Educational Considerations is published at the College of Education, Kansas State University. ***Educational Considerations*** and Kansas State University do not accept responsibility for the views expressed in articles, reviews, and other contributions appearing in this publication. In keeping with the professional educational concept that responsible free expression can promote learning and encourage awareness of truth, contributors are invited to submit conclusions and opinions concerned with varying points of view in and about education.

Educational Considerations is published two times yearly. Editorial offices are located at the College of Education, Bluemont Hall, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506-5301. Correspondence regarding manuscripts should be directed to the Executive Editor at fec@uwm.edu.

No remuneration is offered for accepted articles or other materials submitted.

By submitting to *Educational Considerations*, the author guarantees that the manuscript has not been previously published. Material submitted to ***Educational Considerations*** may vary in length from a paragraph to 4,000 words. The University of Chicago's *Manual of Style* is the editorial style required. Footnotes should be listed at the end of the manuscripts. Tables, graphs, and figures should be placed in separate files. Camera ready hard copy should be available upon request. **Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to Faith Crampton at fec@uwm.edu as an e-mail attachment.** Complete name, address and telephone number should be included in the body of the e-mail. Photographs, drawings, cartoons, and other illustrations are welcome. Authors should be prepared to provide copies of permission to quote copyrighted materials.

Queries concerning proposed articles or reviews are welcome. The editors reserve the right to make grammatical corrections and minor changes in article texts to improve clarity. Address questions regarding specific styles to the Editor.

Subscription to ***Educational Considerations*** is $13.00 per year, with single copies $10.00 each. Correspondence about subscriptions should be addressed to the Business Manager, c/o The Editor, *Educational Considerations*, College of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506-5301. Checks for subscriptions should be made out to ***Educational Considerations***.

Printed in the United States of America.

Educational Considerations Design/Layout by Mary Hammel, Kansas State University

Foreword

Teresa Northern Miller

This special issue of *Educational Considerations* continues the theme of the preparation of educational leaders introduced in the Spring 2005 issue, which was guest-edited by Michelle D. Young, Meredith Mountford, and Gary M. Crow. In particular, this issue, and the one that will follow in Spring 2006, will focus on the role of university partnerships in reforming the preparation of educational leaders.

University preparation programs for educational leaders have been under attack for several years. Most recently, in *Educating School Leaders*, Arthur Levine found "the overall quality of educational administration programs in the United States to be poor."[1] In addition, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and its subsequent requirements for every student to make Adequate Yearly Progress by the year 2014,[2] have placed immense burdens on school leaders. The new emphasis on improved student achievement, with the requisite consequences for underperforming schools, plus the ongoing concerns about administrator preparation programs in general, has resulted in an increased need for reform and redevelopment of administrator preparation programs grounded in current research, based on real-world experiences, and linked to improved student involvement and achievement. University programs for preparation of educational administrators must include collaborative efforts with their communities to produce highly qualified administrators who can succeed, even thrive, in today's conditions for schooling. Such partnerships can achieve simultaneous improvement of all the entities involved. Bringing students, universities and communities together in conversations to develop solutions to their own problems is also supported by new research on student engagement and brain-based instruction.

Several universities have responded to these concerns. In the first article, Meredith Mountford explores "Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for the Simultaneous Renewal of a School District and its Partner University." In this article, she describes how two partnering organizations, the College of Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the Independence School District, experienced a successful partnership leading to simultaneous renewal. In "Training Principals to Ensure Access to Equitable Learning Opportunities in a High-Need Rural School District," Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Robert C. Knoeppel report their findings from an exploratory case study about an advanced leadership development program delivered through a partnership between the Pike County Public Schools and the University of Kentucky, funded through the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Cynthia J. Norris with the Graduate Studies Cohort, examines the effects of a partnership between two doctoral cohorts at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in "The Earth Is Not Flat Anymore: Reflections on the Impact of A Rural/Urban Educational Leadership Exchange on Place-Based Instruction." This partnership allowed participants to enhance their understanding of the difference location makes in elementary and secondary education in order to find a "compassionate sense of place." Finally, Teresa Northern Miller and Trudy Salsberry, in "Portfolio Analysis: Documenting the Progress and Performance of Educational Administration Students," assess the success of two program delivery formats, one traditional university-based and the other a district-based academy. The academy was designed, developed, and delivered through a partnership between a Midwestern university and a local school district. These articles celebrate the variety and successes of university partnership programs currently answering the calls for reform in educational administrator preparation programs.

Endnotes

[1] Arthur Levine, *Educating School Leaders* (New York: The Education Schools Project, 2005), 23.

[2] *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. (2002).

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for the Simultaneous Renewal of a School District and Its Partner University

Meredith Mountford

Organizational self-renewal is the process in which existing structural and cognitive order within an organization is dissolved and new order is created. The new order affects patterns of organizational activities such as structures, systems, processes, and culture. As new order is formed, new knowledge is created. Hence, organizational "self-renewal takes place irreversibly as existing knowledge is restructured to create new missions and domains for the organization."[1] Several conditions are necessary for renewal to occur in either organization; yet these conditions alone are insufficient for simultaneous renewal to occur for *both* organizations. This article examines a set of sufficient conditions that have resulted in the generation of new organizational knowledge for both organizations.[2]

While successful school district-university partnerships are said to be few and far between, there is also significant evidence that suggests such partnerships can lead to positive change for both organizations.[3] However, it is difficult to know if "successful" school district-university partnerships are, in fact, few and far between and/or whether *both* organizations actually benefit from these types of partnership. We posit a two-fold reason for this.[4] First, the literature reporting on partnerships such as these typically base the notion of "success" solely on whether or not the school district has met their preconceived goals and objectives, and rarely pays attention to the effect the partnership has had on the university's organizational objectives. A related reason for the lack of understanding of what success really means for university-school partnerships is that success of the partnership is most often measured using only the outcome data of the school partner such as student achievement scores, teacher retention rates, and other performance indicators for which school districts are commonly held accountable.[5] To be sure, these measures are quantifiable and are often considered potential outcomes of a university-school district partnership which might indicate some type of success at the school level. Yet, outcome measures are inadequate for capturing the ongoing cyclic processes necessary for the renewal of a school district and university partnership which, we argue, are also important indicators of the success of such partnerships.

A different way of determining the success of these partnerships would require that the leaders of both organizations give more attention to and report on each organization's ability to create and sustain the conditions necessary to cycle through the various stages of organizational renewal.[6] For example, consider how Starratt characterizes the role of the leader in any self-renewing organization:

> Leaders in self-renewing organizations lead by calling attention to what the ongoing agenda is for all members of the organization by pointing to issues that need clarification, problems that need to be renamed, and old frameworks that realign old cause-and effect-patterns.[7]

In essence, Starratt is suggesting that detecting renewal requires a leader to capture the dynamic and multidimensional processes involved in creating new organizational patterns and structures during a change process rather than simply capturing quantifiable outcomes of the change. Detecting such a fluid process, however, requires a lens that has been adjusted to capture the presence of the various stages of the renewal cycle, the conditions necessary for these stages to emerge, as well as the conditions that are sufficient for simultaneous renewal to occur for *both* organizations.[8]

In sum, looking at the outcome measures of both partnering organizations will certainly help determine the success of the partnership, but reflection on the presence of the conditions and processes necessary for renewal to occur, critical inquiry into changes in organizational structures and patterns at each organization, and finally, observation and communication of the new knowledge created at each organization are also appropriate ways for leaders to determine the success of school district-university partnership.[9]

The purpose of this article is to describe how two partnering organizations, the College of Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the Independence School District experienced a successful partnership leading to simultaneous renewal. A demonstration of this successful partnership is described not by student achievement outcomes or similar measures, but rather a description of the cyclic stages and conditions that sufficiently supported the occurrence of renewal processes for both organizations.

This article describes the journey of simultaneous renewal for both organizations. The description of our journey begins at a point when each organization implemented chaos to stimulate simultaneous renewal within their respective organizations. Successful adjustment and adaptation to major changes within each organization provided and supported the conditions necessary to stimulate simultaneous renewal for both organizations. The new knowledge created at each organization served as evidence of successful simultaneous renewal and where the story of our journey ends—even though the process of simultaneous renewal continues at both organizations today.

Ultimately, this article argues that successful school district/university partnerships can be detected by examining cyclic stages of renewal which result in the creation of new knowledge that manifests itself in the form of changes to organizational structures and patterns. To that end, we have adapted Nonaka's renewal process model to describe the cycle of renewal between a university and a school district.[10] Those stages include: (1) pre-existing order and stability within the partnership; (2) the dissolution of existing structural and cognitive order at each organization; (3) the creation of new knowledge at each organization; and (4) the emergence of new structural and cognitive patterns at each organization which support both organizations. Each stage of the cycle and the new knowledge created at both organizations is described and further, as posited by Nonaka and Takeuchi, we also discuss how their five conditions—intention, autonomy, requisite variety, redundancy, and chaos—

Meredith Mountford is Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

sufficiently supported renewal for both organizations.[11] Examples of how these conditions contributed to the creation of new organizational structures and patterns, and how they sufficiently supported simultaneous renewal are also provided.

The University/School District Partnership

A partnership between the College of Education (COE) at the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) and the Independence School District (ISD) is one of the several relationships that was developed through the MU Partnership for Educational Renewal (MPER). MPER is a collaborative organization dedicated to positive systemic educational change. The partnership consists of the MU Colleges of Education and Arts and Science, the Midwestern State Department of Education, and 21 public school districts. The pre-existing stability of this partnership itself served as a primary condition for renewal to occur. However, when intention and requisite variety, two of the five conditions necessary for simultaneous renewal, were added to the existing stable partnership, they acted as a catalyst for change.[12] In the following paragraphs, each of these two conditions is described and followed by examples of their existence within the College of Education and the Independence School District.

Intention is simply an organization's aspirations to its goals. Intention frequently comes in the form of visions, mission, and strategic plans within an educational system.[13] MPER's mission was to engage partnering school and university personnel with students and parents to improve Missouri's educational system from preschool through college. Demonstrated success of this intention could be witnessed in the form of a teacher fellows program, a teacher release program, and cooperative field experiences for teachers. While these programs met organizational intentions related to teacher development, they did not extend beyond to a leadership preparation program which was important for the university's contribution to the state and a strong leadership preparation program highly needed at ISD. ISD had several aspiring leaders who wanted to obtain doctoral degrees in educational leadership as well as obtain leadership licensure. The superintendents and board members at ISD wanted their aspiring leaders to be trained as a cohort in one program that could focus more specifically on the needs of the ISD district improvement plan. While the teacher leaders and administrators were involved in several different leadership programs and more were willing to further their education, there was not a program available that seemed to be addressing their needs as well as the needs of their district. Therefore, a common intent was also present at ISD.

Another condition important for both organizations to realize was requisite variety. Requisite variety occurs when the diversity within the internal environments matches the variety and diversity in the external environment. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi:

> Everyone in the environment should be assured of the fastest access to the broadest variety of necessary information going through the fewest steps. If this does not occur organizational members cannot interact on equal terms which hinders the search for new information. Developing a flat and flexible organizational structure in which the different units are intertwined with an informational network is one way to deal with the complexity of the environment.[14]

An example of the presence of this condition came from several ISD administrators. While their school district, like many others, is bureaucratically structured on paper and in policy, there existed enough informality and flexibility within the lines of communication for several of the administrators in the district to approach the associate superintendent and the superintendent with a new idea for the MPER partnership. These administrators were aware that the COE at MU had a reputable Doctorate of Education program in educational leadership, but they were also aware that the structure of the program mandated that students enrolled in the program spend a month for two successive summers at the university's main campus in order to complete rigorous and extensive coursework of the program. Many of the administrators at ISD were interested in applying for the 2003 cohort program but were concerned that their positions as administrators and new summer school requirements would not allow them to be on campus at the university during the summer sessions. In addition, ISD superintendents had a desire to focus their administrators' continuing education on the leadership skills necessary to lead their faculty toward achieving the objectives of the school district's improvement plan. The presence of the condition of requisite variety within both organizations, the COE and ISD, made it possible for all involved stakeholders to be aware of their internal organizational needs as well as what was being offered in the external environment.

Requisite variety, common intentions, and pre-existing stability within the partnership supported the development of both formal and informal relationships and lines of communication to develop between the superintendents of ISD and the dean of the COE. This enabled the superintendent and associate superintendent of ISD to approach the dean of the COE and request that their pre-existing partnership be extended to include a site-based educational leadership doctoral degree program for nine of their administrators in which the curriculum of the program would be tailored to the district's improvement initiatives.

The Dissolution of Structural and Cognitive Patterns

The dissolution of order as a primary condition for simultaneous renewal has previously been described as an intentional breakdown of structural and cognitive patterns which subsequently affect organizational activities and culture. This intentional disruption to order, however, is not intended to affect the stability of an organization, but rather to preserve stability amidst change. The environmental fluctuation triggers a breakdown in the organization out of which new knowledge is created.[15] Changes suggested by ISD and the subsequent changes made by the COE serve as the best examples of how some structural and cognitive patterns related to the existing Ed.D. program would need to be dissolved in order for new knowledge to be created for the proposed site-based doctoral program.

In order to accommodate the request made to the COE by the ISD superintendents, several aspects of the existing Ed.D. leadership program would have to be reconceptualized. Prior to this request, cognitive models, structural patterns, and resource deployment models of the Ed.D. leadership program required students from across the state to come to campus for the summers. Regional faculty at partner institutions delivered fall and winter coursework. The Ed.D. leadership curriculum centered around five leadership themes, but were nonspecific to any particular district improvement efforts; therefore, the curriculum would require some reconsideration. Finally, the resources necessary to have the coursework delivered to ISD students by faculty from that region of the state (as done in the

existing program) were not available. A reconsideration of resource deployment or innovative ways to secure funding for the ISD project would be necessary.

Initially, superintendents from ISD, the dean of the COE, and faculty from MU's Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) department, who would ultimately be responsible for implementing changes made to the existing Ed.D. program, were not sure that it could be reconceptualized to meet the needs of ISD. However, the dean of the COE arranged a meeting with representative faculty members from ELPA, principals (prospective students) from ISD, and the associate superintendent and superintendent of ISD to brainstorm ideas. Several of these meetings occurred and resulted in sufficiently meeting a condition of the renewal process related to the sharing and creation of new knowledge: redundancy.

While people often consider redundant processes to be unnecessary or inefficient, Nonaka and Takeuchi describe redundancy as a condition in the renewal process as follows:

> There is intentional overlapping of information about business activities, management responsibilities, and the company as a whole. Sharing redundant information promotes the sharing of tacit knowledge and allows individuals to invade each others functional boundaries, offer advice, or provide new information necessary for renewal.[16]

In other words, redundancy helps build unusual communication channels in which one organization learns of the structural and cognitive patterns of another organization.

To be sure, redundancy was present during the brainstorming meetings involving the stakeholders. Therefore, it served as a sufficient condition for communication to occur among the stakeholders most affected by the outcome of the decision. This continuous process of questioning and collaborative brainstorming, or redundancy, allowed an overlapping of the needs of the district with the structures of the leadership program which subsequently enabled the creation of new organizational knowledge. The redundant processes stimulated new ideas to emerge from various stakeholders, and a plan for a site-based Ed.D. leadership program in ISD was developed.

The Emergence of New Structural and Cognitive Patterns

The renewal process requires that new patterns of order develop after existing patterns have been dissolved. This is often called creating "order out of chaos."[17] The benefits of this creative chaos and subsequent order is most likely to be realized after those involved in the process have had time to reflect on emergent ideas. Others believe that it is important that reflection also occur during the process. For example, Schön stated: "When someone reflects while in action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established technique and theory, but constructs a new theory of the unique case."[18] This statement suggests that during the process of new knowledge creation, participants must be able and willing to break free of the pre-existing structural patterns if new knowledge that will ultimately affect organizational structures and patterns is to emerge. Reflections from the meetings between the COE and ISD stakeholders were recorded, and the dean of the COE and others who had participated in the process created a project plan, soon to be known as the Independence School District Project. The plan summarized the potential dissolution of existing organizational structures and patterns within the Ed.D. model and new organizational patterns that would potentially need to be created in order to facilitate an Ed.D. program specifically tailored for the administrators at ISD.

The plan suggested that the same (or a similar) curriculum and materials that were currently used in the Ed.D. model also be used in ISD but that the instructor of each course would specifically tailor the curriculum to align with the objectives outlined in the ISD District Improvement Plan. In this way, the majority of the curriculum used in the existing leadership program could be assessed to see how well it could be applied to an individual district's improvement needs. While students from the Independence School District were earning doctoral level credits, the altered version of the Ed.D. leadership program curricular model was being assessed for its usefulness to a specific district's improvement plan. Although the plan seemed to introduce a win-win scenario for both ISD and the COE, it also required a considerable amount of autonomy be given to faculty who taught the courses for the proposed project.

Autonomy is a condition for renewal described by Nonaka and Takeuchi where "individuals within the organization should be allowed to act autonomously as far as circumstances permit. This will encourage them to create knowledge."[19] Autonomy has several beneficial consequences for an organization, such as amplification of information, self-organizing groups, and diminished suboptimization.[20] It would be up to those professors, working cooperatively with the associate superintendent, to modify the curriculum so that it was focused on district improvement plans and to assess the generalizability of changes made to the curriculum for potential use in other site-specific partnerships. In addition, the project plan included the idea that several of the courses could be redesigned and delivered by a team consisting of the associate superintendent, the superintendent of the district, and a professor from the COE. This was a self-organizing team that was catalyzed by the presence of autonomy within the renewal process.

The plan for site-based summers was perhaps the most significant change that was included in the project proposal. This change seemed to offer the biggest risk in terms of disrupting cultural patterns that had been established in the Ed.D. model. The inception of the Ed.D. program's month-long summer sessions—when all of the students from across the state come together at the university's campus to receive intensive coursework by a team of faculty—was a highly valued component of the program. Evaluations conducted on the program suggested it was the foremost means for student networking, collaboration, and team building. Therefore dissolution of this organizational structure meant that the administrators from the Independence School District would lose out on one of the most highly valued processes included in the existent Ed.D. model.

Those involved in writing the project proposal understood that sacrificing the on-campus summer sessions could have deleterious effects for the students from ISD. However, the condition of requisite variety made COE faculty aware that new state guidelines for summer school in school districts could also affect the Ed.D. leadership program's summer delivery model. This new knowledge caused a sense of "crisis" related to summer instruction regardless of where it was to be held. This "crisis" paved the way for faculty who typically delivered the Ed.D. leadership program to rethink how summer programming was to be delivered in the future if principals who made up about 40 percent of the existing Ed.D. program's summer

enrollment could not attend. Further, faculty believed that an on-site program could potentially be a new model for summer course delivery. Therefore, faculty from the COE began to view the ISD Project as a potential pilot program for a new way to deliver the summer curriculum in light of the new state requirements.

Thus, creative chaos was introduced from an external organization, the state, through new summer school requirements that now mandated summer school programs and required districts to have their administrators present for summer school supervision. Nonaka and Nonaka and Takeuchi argue that creative chaos stimulates the interaction between the organization and the external environment.[21] When fluctuation is introduced into an organization, its members face a breakdown of cognitive patterns thus providing an opportunity to rethink fundamental perspectives. The creative chaos introduced in this case led to the dissolution of old cognitive models and generation of new knowledge that ultimately affected both organizations simultaneously.

The Generation of New Knowledge: Simultaneous Renewal

The journey conveying how each organization, the college and the school district, met the conditions which were sufficient in stimulating simultaneous renewal within their respective organizations has been described. Successful adjustment and adaptation to major changes within each organization is evidence that these conditions were sufficient for both organizations to cycle through the first three stages of a simultaneous process. This adjustment and adaptation to the positive changes that emerged from the simultaneous renewal process required the creation of new knowledge at each organization. In the following sections, we describe the new structural and cognitive patterns that emerged because of the simultaneous renewal process at the university and school district.

Evidence of simultaneous renewal at the university included examples of the emergence of new resource deployment, changes to the doctoral level learning outcomes, and a project plan and process for the implementation of a site-based doctoral program. Evidence of simultaneous renewal at ISD has come in the form of action research projects students will/are carrying out as the final requirement for their doctorate. As mentioned earlier, each project must provide evidence that new knowledge was created by carrying out the action research project within each administrators/student's building. Evidence that the students have catalyzed self-renewal within the buildings they administer will be marked by documented changes in student achievement and evidence of the existence of the conditions cyclic processes necessary for renewal.

The Independence School District Project Plan that was generated from the brainstorming sessions was met with resistance by some faculty members from the educational leadership department of the COE. A major concern existed that such a small site-based program would use too many human and capital resources and that the ELPA department could not afford to expend those resources. Therefore, for the first time, a school district and the COE pledged a considerable amount of money to run the program as a pilot project. In addition, faculty could earn extra compensation and would have all of their expenses reimbursed for teaching a course at ISD. This new form of cooperative resource deployment (never done before in the COE) generated considerable interest from faculty to become involved in the ISD project.

Final learning outcomes for the students from ISD were altered from those of the original Ed.D. leadership program. Changes to expectations for the final comprehensive exams for ISD students were also made. ISD students were expected to focus their writing on evidence of how their doctoral program had helped them to meet the district improvement plan objectives. In addition, a portion of their final comprehensive exam was to be a proposal for an action research project that would serve as their dissertation. Ultimately, students are expected to use an action research model of inquiry to guide their final research effort, and the outcome of the action research project is to catalyze a cycle of renewal within the buildings in which they serve as administrators.

As is the point of pilot projects, much is learned from the "first go round" which is useful if the project is to be carried out again with a different organization. Through the processes mentioned earlier, a plan has been established to carry out a similar program with any other district that requests to do so and whose leaders are able and motivated to meet the necessary conditions of renewal. To date, three other districts have requested similar programs in their districts.

Summary and Conclusion

This article posited four stages and five supporting conditions as necessary and sufficient for simultaneous renewal to occur between two organizations.[22] Further, because of the occurrence and evidence we found of simultaneous renewal, we argue that the university/school partnership described in this article was and continues to be a successful partnership. Evidence that the conditions outlined in the simultaneous renewal process were sufficiently met by a partnering college of education and school district was provided, and examples of the new knowledge generated at each organization were given.

The point of articulating the stages and conditions that were sufficient in bringing about simultaneous renewal was to demonstrate that by examining and producing evidence of the cyclic processes and conditions necessary for simultaneous renewal to occur, we are able to more deeply understand what is necessary for successful school district/university partnerships rather than relying only on student performance measures as suggested in most reform models. Using models of reform which focus only on outcomes does not help us understand how new knowledge is created. Therefore, replicating the necessary processes and conditions to create new knowledge the same way again is and has been elusive.[23]

Educational systems are perhaps one of the most stable organizations found in our society; and while some may view this stability positively, others see it as an organizational failure to challenge the status quo. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has mandated several reform initiatives, but only a handful of school districts has experienced success in implementing them. The process described in this article suggests that layering new reform patterns on top of pre-existing structures is not sufficient for creating positive change and will not result in districts' meeting the new objectives of NCLB. While the majority of NCLB objectives focus on outcomes, others are meant to examine processes taking place in school districts. The processes school districts choose to meet objectives, such as closing the achievement gap, promoting collaborative decision-making, and implementing professional development programs, require the assistance of a university partner and simultaneously strengthen the knowledge within the university. As a result, in an age of increased

accountability and chaos, understanding and harnessing patterns and cycles can help districts and universities create new organizational patterns at both institutions and "redefine" what a successful partnership really means.

Endnotes

[1] Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company* (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 72.

[2] Ikujiro Nonaka, "Creating Organizational Order Out of Chaos: Self-Renewal in Japanese Firms," *California Management Review* (Spring 1988): 57-73; Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*.

[3] Richard Andrews, "Beyond Change and Reform: MPER and Simultaneous Renewal," *MPERspective* 1 (February 2004): 1; Gary D. Fenstermacher, "Agenda for Education in Democracy," in *Leadership for Educational Renewal*, Wilma J. Smith, Ed. (San Francisco, California: Jossey –Bass, 1999), 1-10; John I. Goodlad, "Flow, Eros, and Ethos in Educational Renewal," *Phi Delta Kappan* 80 (April 1999): 571-578; Margaret Wheatley, "Innovation Means Relying on Everyone's Creativity," *Leader to Leader* (Spring 2001), http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/ innovationmeans.html.

[4] Author's Note: While this article was solo authored, the word "we" is used to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Missouri, the superintendents of the Independence School District, the administrators in Independence who are enrolled in the Ed.D. program outlined in this article, and Mark Ehlert, a research professor at the University of Missouri, all of whom made the generation of this article possible.

[5] Kenneth A. Sirotnik, "Making Sense of Educational Renewal," *Phi Delta Kappan* 80 (April 1999): 606-610; Roger Soder, "When Words Find Their Meaning: Renewal Versus Reform," *Phi Delta Kappan* 80 (April 1999): 568-570; Wheatley, "Innovation."

[6] Ulrich C. Reitzug and Leonard C. Burrello, "How Principals Can Build Self-Renewing Schools," *Educational Leadership* 52 (April 1995), http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/9504/reitzug.html; Robert J. Starratt, *Leaders with Vision: The Quest for School Renewal* (Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, 1995).

[7] Starratt, 62.

[8] Andrews, "Beyond Change and Reform"; Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*; Sirotnik, "Making Sense of Educational Renewal"; Starratt, *Leaders with Vision*.

[9] Sirotnik, "Making Sense of Educational Renewal"; Wilma F. Smith, "Leadership for Educational Renewal," *Phi Delta Kappan* 80 (April 1999): 602-605; Soder, "When Words Find Their Meaning"; Starratt, *Leaders with Vision*.

[10] Nonaka, "Creating Organizational Order Out of Chaos."

[11] Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*.

[12] Nonaka, "Creating Organizational Order Out of Chaos"; Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*.

[13] Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (Blooomington, Indiana: National Education Service, 1998); Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*; Wheatley, "Innovation."

[14] Nonaka and Takeuchi, 80.

[15] Nonaka, "Creating Organizational Order out of Chaos."

[16] Nonaka and Takeuchi, 79.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Temple Smith, 1983).

[19] Nonaka and Takeuchi, 80.

[20] Harold Hook, *Model-Netics* (Houston, Texas: Main Event Management, 2001); Nonaka & Takeuchi.

[21] Nonaka, "Creating Organizational Order out of Chaos"; Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*.

[22] Nonaka, "Creating Organizational Order out of Chaos"; Nonaka and Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*.

[23] Soder, "When Words Find Their Meaning"; Sirotnik, "Making Sense of Educational Renewal."

Training Principlas to Ensure Access to Equitable Learning Opportunities in a High-Need Rural School District

Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Robert C. Knoeppel

During the mid-1980s in Kentucky, a grassroots advocacy group composed of 66 property-poor school districts, seven local school boards, and 22 public school students formed, calling itself the Council for Better Education, Inc. The group filed a class-action suit in 1985 asserting that "funding in Kentucky was *inequitable* and *inadequate*—inequitable because some school districts had much more money than others to support education and inadequate because of Kentucky's low level of educational achievement."[1] Although only seeking changes in school funding, their legal action eventually led to a Kentucky Supreme Court ruling in June 1989 that "the state's *entire* elementary and secondary school system—not just the school finance system—[was] inefficient and unconstitutional."[2] This sweeping decision applied to "the whole gamut of the common school system in Kentucky."[3] The ruling led to enactment of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA), the "most comprehensive education legislation in modern American history."[4] Kentucky became one of the leaders in comprehensive systemic change in public schooling because KERA significantly changed curriculum, governance, and finance and introduced a demanding statewide system of school accountability.[5]

Despite efforts through legislation to provide equitable learning opportunities for all Kentucky children and youths, many schools districts in eastern Kentucky continue to struggle to ensure that all students learn and achieve required performance levels in the state accountability system. Although PreK-12 educational funding throughout the Commonwealth is more equitable today than it was in the past, influences created by widespread poverty remain. Student underachievement on state accountability measures and school improvement efforts, predominately in poor schools, provides evidence that funding is inadequate.[6] Many eastern Kentucky public schools situated in Central Appalachian counties are classified as "distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission because their three-year average poverty and unemployment rates are at least 1.5 times the nation's average.[7] Unlike the regions of Northern and Southern Appalachia that experienced economic and population growth over the past 40 years,[8] most Central Appalachia counties cover mountainous terrain and have decreasing population rates, with 85% of the residents living in isolated rural areas.[9] The counties lost their major source of revenue when the coal mining industry was cut nearly in half in the late 1900s, leaving many residents without employment opportunities and county governments without tax revenue sources for education.[10] Eastern Kentucky counties were among the hardest hit.

This article shares findings from an exploratory case study about an advanced leadership development program for administrator-certified practitioners in a Central Appalachian school district. The goal of the Principals Excellence Program (PEP), one of 24 projects supported by federal funds through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) School Leadership Development Program, is to transform the principalship by developing visionary instructional leaders able to increase student learning in high-need rural schools. The program is delivered through a partnership between Pike County Public Schools (PCPS) and the University of Kentucky (UKY). A team of university professors and administrative practitioners facilitates learning experiences in the district for principals, assistant principals, and administrator-certified teachers seeking administrative positions.

The next two sections provide information about the contextual conditions that define the district as high need and an overview of the program and research design. The fourth section presents findings about: (a) preparing school leaders to promote learning success for all students; (b) addressing equity and social justice issues; and (c) providing adequate learning opportunities. Perspectives from representatives of all stakeholder groups are integrated to provide a holistic assessment of the program. The article closes with a discussion about lessons learned thus far about effective leadership preparation.

Context of Leadership Challenges: Pike County Public Schools

Pike County comprises the easternmost tip of Kentucky bordering Virginia and West Virginia, miles distant from any metropolitan area. Pikeville, the county's largest town, benefited from the influx of millions of dollars to finance infrastructure development when it was designated as a growth center by the Appalachian Regional Center.[12] While Pikeville and its independent school system have benefited from this economic boom, the rest of the county remains economically distressed. Data from the last decade indicate that its population decreased by 5.3%, and 33% of the households report annual incomes under $15,000.[12]

Although the 90% of the population of the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky is classified as "white persons, not of Hispanic/Latino origin," it is 98% in Pike County.[13] Most Pike County residents were born there or in nearby counties and have resided in the region most of their lives. According to school district educators, many children have never traveled outside Pike County, and a few in remote hollows have never visited Pikeville. While 62% of the population over age 25 are high school graduates, only 10% of that group have complet-

Tricia Browne-Ferrigno is Project Director of the Principals Excellence Program and Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky. Robert C. Knoeppel is Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky.

ed a post-secondary degree despite the local availability of Pikeville College.[14] Welfare assistance was first introduced during the New Deal era; today the county has multiple generations of residents relying solely on governmental support.[15] Hence, diversity within the county population is based upon socioeconomic status, level of education, residence location, work and life experiences—not ethnicity, race, or nationality.

A sobering picture of the county's high-need characteristics, based upon key indicators of child wellbeing, emerged from the *Kentucky Kids Count* report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.[16] Between 25% and 33% of children under the age of five have been neglected or physically, sexually, or emotionally abused. Children under the age of 18 comprise 26% of the total county population, and 30% of them live in poverty.[17] Approximately 69% of the students in Pike County schools qualify to participate in free or reduced-price lunch programs; schools located in remote areas of the district report free or reduced-price lunch rates above 90%.

KERA reconstructed the Commonwealth's entire system of PreK-12 public schooling and launched demanding school accountability to ensure that all children learn at high levels.[18] Although the vision for reformed public education embraces high student achievement for all students, rural schools in eastern Kentucky face formidable challenges. Nonetheless, the Pike County School Board maintains a sustained commitment to the belief that all children can learn and shares its expectations through its slogan, "Success For All," adopted four years ago. However, two stumbling blocks to achieving success for all became apparent. First, a 2001 survey of the then-current principals revealed that many viewed themselves as competent managers, but not as strong instructional leaders. Transforming the district leaders' vision into reality requires principals who have appropriate dispositions and necessary skills for leading instructional programs. Second, the district faced projected vacancies in administrative positions in half of its schools.

Although many educational practitioners in the district are qualified to hold administrative positions, few aspire to become principals. These potential leadership candidates, while self-nominated for the certification process, candidly admit their motivation to complete graduate degrees was mainly to increase their salaries. The district leaders realized that they needed to institute a reconceptualization of school leadership and build sustainable leadership capacity within the district. They sought external help to accomplish their goal from Kentucky's land-grant research university located 150 miles away in Lexington.

Addressing Leadership Development: Principals Excellence Program (PEP)

Working as collaborative partners, UKY leadership educators and PCPS leadership practitioners developed the framework for advanced principal preparation and then sought external funds to implement it. The proposal was selected in September 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education as one of 24 projects to be supported through the NCLB School Leadership Development Program. The three project objectives are the recruitment, development, and retention of high-quality educational leaders. The program curriculum is based upon the four recurring themes—a vision for success, a focus on teaching and learning, an involvement of all stakeholders, a demonstration of ethical behavior—appearing among the nearly 200 indicators in the six ISLLC *Standards for School Leaders*.[19] The yearlong program provides cohesive and coherent professional development experiences focused intently on the work and effort required to lead contemporary public schools; selected curricular elements address specific challenges faced by high-need rural districts.

The project design for the advanced leadership development program is an interconnected series of seminar-workshops, clinical experiences guided by trained mentors, comprehensive school-based research, and structured reflections. The envisioned outcome is the creation of a professional community of visionary educational leaders who have the disposition to be change agents; commitment to be lifelong learners; skill to be effective decision-makers and reflective practitioners; and desire to remain or become principals in the district.

Integration of Best Practices in Principal Preparation

PEP incorporates recommendations for redesigned principal preparation and participant selection.[20] The curriculum integrates best practices in adult learning, inquiry-based professional training, and community building.[21] This advanced leadership development for administrator-certified practitioners—practicing and aspiring principals—fills a missing element in the literature about continuing professional growth of school leaders.[22]

A core component of the project is the concurrent action research conducted by participants each semester in selected district schools. Clinical practica guided by mentor principals can potentially foster role transformation and support socialization to a new community of practice.[23] Because clinical practice is greatly enhanced through support provided by qualified professionals, district leaders carefully select high-performing principals to serve as project-trained mentors during the biweekly field-based experiences.[24] The reasons for integrating mentoring are threefold. First, it simulates role socialization for aspiring and novice principals.[25] Second, principals serving as mentors have opportunities for their own professional development.[26] Finally, mentoring increases the capacity for both new and veteran administrators to meet the demands of school leadership.[27]

The closed-cohort model in which an identified group remains together without changes in membership was selected because the potential exists for creating a risk-safe learning environment where participants can candidly discuss issues and engage in constructive conflict resolution about problems.[28] A well-functioning cohort supports peer sharing of experiences, group determination of action, participant reflection, and leadership development.[29] Further, the potential exists within a well-functioning cohort for cultivating a strong and lasting professional community.[30] Through ongoing group-development activities and networking, cohort members can develop collegial relationships that support and sustain them after program completion.

Intensive Engagement in Leadership Development

Because clinical practice is a core component of the program, participants need time to work in schools other than where they are assigned. Hence, with wholehearted support by the superintendent and school board, all principals and teachers participating as cohort members are released from their responsibilities one day every week throughout the spring and fall semesters to engage in program-sponsored activities. On an alternating schedule, cohort members either work at a school site with their mentor principals and inquiry team members conducting action research about student learning or

participate in a seminar-workshop facilitated by university professors and district administrators. The full day, biweekly cohort meetings allow time for participants to talk about fieldwork experiences, assigned readings, and educational issues and to reflect upon individual and group learning. During cohort sessions, practicing principals often share concerns or celebrations related to their practice which provide additional practical information about school leadership to aspiring and novice principals. This pattern of alternating full-day clinical practica and cohort meetings stimulates linkage between theory and practice.

Fieldwork Guided by Carefully Selected Mentor Principals

Elementary and secondary school principals are selected by district leaders to serve as mentors to support the field-based component of the project. The host schools where cohort members meet for a full semester represent different rural communities, student populations, faculty and staff, educational programs, and facilities. Most mentor principals are selected according to their effectiveness as instructional leaders and their career experiences, leadership styles, and willingness to open their schools to scrutiny; however, a few were asked to serve as mentors in order to bring high-performing inquiry teams on site to stimulate improvement efforts. The superintendent makes the final assignments of cohort members to mentor principals, and the project director provides training about the curricular foci for the semester they serve as mentors.

School-Based Action Research About Learning Issues

The program-supported action research must be conducted at sites other than where cohort members work in order to give them opportunities to visit different school communities in the district and work with different school leaders. With assistance from their mentor principals, small teams of cohort members identify authentic problems to investigate at the host schools. Each inquiry team must design and complete two collaborative action research projects that require formal proposals, human subjects research approval, and formal written reports. During the yearlong program, cohort members have opportunities to work in an elementary school and then in a secondary school. Findings from the action research projects are disseminated to different authentic audiences within the district.

Continuous Evaluation of Program Impact: Study Design

The federal grant program supporting PEP requires formative and summative evaluation, and, thus, data have been collected regularly since the beginning of project implementation. The case study design was selected because the inquiry is bound by specific time periods and encapsulated in a particular structure.[31] Further, because the essence of case study research is exploration, a qualitative researcher can begin an inquiry with "a target of interest" and then describe "whatever emerges of significance."[32]

Data collection strategies are varied (e.g., surveys, reflections, small-group interviews, observations) and include information from members of all stakeholder groups: cohort participants; mentor principals; district administrators; and program instructors. The study focuses intentionally upon capturing the perceptions of cohort members at various times throughout their learning experiences rather than only at the beginning and end of their yearlong training. Their responses over time provide ongoing evaluation and opportunities for the instructional team to adapt the program to meet the changing needs of the participants. Mentor principals, district administrators, and project instructors provide assessments about program implementation through written reflections and group interviews. The project director serves as the primary investigator. In-progress reports about the program and articles integrating selected findings have been disseminated.[33]

Advanced Leadership Development: Participant Assessments

The findings presented in this section were taken from written responses to a reflective questionnaire administered during the tenth month of each cohort's yearlong training, i.e., October 2003, October 2004. Where appropriate, the prompts that generated the comments are provided. Cohort members presented insider perspectives through their reactions as individuals actively participating in the intensive professional development. Outsider perspectives were provided by mentor principals, district administrators, and program instructors who in various ways supported learning experiences of cohort members.

Preparing School Leaders to Promote Learning Success for All

The instructional team spent many hours during the opening months of each cohort engaging participants in perception-broadening activities that challenged cohort members to think beyond their school-based experiences and to explore issues systemically. The intent was to enhance collaboration and develop trust among individuals who did not know one another and to stimulate thinking about districts as educational systems in which all schools and local communities play important roles in student learning. Participants provided their assessments of the program through their written responses to the prompt: "In what ways is PEP preparing school leaders in rural districts to promote learning and success for all children?"

A novice high school assistant principal wrote that the program was "broadening participants' perspectives about education" and "training leaders to be more reflective, make decisions that are research-based, and develop leadership skills of teachers and others throughout the schools." Another cohort member asserted, "PEP offers each individual an opportunity to grow professionally so that the participant is better prepared for a leadership role, or if the individual is already in a leadership role, [to be] better qualified."

Another respondent believed that the program has been effective in stimulating innovation and reflection because instructors "encourage cohort members to think outside the box." A high school assistant principal appreciated the way instructors prodded cohort members to reflect upon their assumptions about student learning and then challenged them to analyze how their beliefs influence their actions: "PEP [instructors] provided many provoking questions and situations that made us think about what we really believe and compare that to what is true social justice. We have an obligation to serve every child; therefore, we are being groomed to think how leadership influences our reaction to that obligation." According to an elementary teacher, "PEP has made us understand that we are working for the district, and not just one school." This systemic perspective helped her to understand the importance of collaboration and cooperation among schools, especially to improve instructional programs.

Although a veteran teacher had participated in "numerous professional development opportunities over the past several years" before joining the first cohort, she asserted that PEP by far "impacted [her]

professional growth" the greatest. She perceived that the intensive leadership development program was also changing the district: "The [professional development] experience helps to create better learning environments in Pike County. The impact that the program has had on the leaders of the schools will create more opportunities for student success. It is simple: If leadership improves, learning improves." A mentor principal held a similar viewpoint. She volunteered to assist with a second clinical practicum because she believed that the experiential learning component, with its specific emphasis on student learning in rural schools, was a key to the project's success. She stated:

> The culture in eastern Kentucky is unique. Therefore, it is important for aspiring administrators to be involved in the schools... When PEP participants are placed in the schools, they are given opportunities to observe how school leaders are addressing equity issues... PEP is preparing school leaders in rural districts to promote learning and success for all children by the useful information provided through action research.

A cohort member agreed that the program filled a void in the preparation of rural school leaders. She works as a media specialist and conducted a literature review for her peers to use in their action research reports. She discovered that there is "not a lot of literature for school leaders in rural districts." Being able to participate in a program like this "gives leaders an opportunity to collaborate with each other [about issues] in rural settings."

Supervisors of instruction are certified district-level administrators who assist teachers in developing curriculum and principals in supervising instructional programs. A veteran supervisor offered his assessment of the project's effectiveness based upon observed changes in participants' professional practice: "PEP is providing aspiring leaders with an opportunity to gain valuable insight into certain aspects of an administrator's role before actually assuming an administrative position. In instances where participants are already principals, PEP is greatly accelerating their learning curve and developing their knowledge base."

The director of curriculum and instruction, who is responsible for the evaluation of all school administrators in the district, offered a slightly different assessment of the program's impact. She viewed the intensive professional development program as a means to build leadership capacity, a critically important strategy in isolated districts where few new residents relocate: "PEP is preparing school leaders with a broader scope of understanding about how leadership directly impacts student learning. Rural districts are not able to recruit administrators into their schools; so it becomes absolutely imperative that districts focus on developing those already there."

Unlike traditional preservice preparation programs and other professional development activities, PEP focused attention on rural school issues. The curricular topics, sometimes provocative instructional strategies, and clinical experiences in local schools promoted the development of instructional leadership skills. Project participants and observers alike perceived that the program was changing administrative practice in the district.

Addressing Equity and Social Justice Issues

Despite the multiple challenges of educating children and youth potentially at risk of not learning, principals must institutionalize the district's vision of "success for all" in their schools. Thus, the program curriculum and learning activities intentionally concentrated on instructional leadership and ways to increase student learning in high-need rural schools. Commentary presented here emerged from responses to the question: "How is social justice (i.e., equitable learning opportunities for all students) addressed through PEP to prepare educational leaders for the high-stakes accountability context in public schools today?"

According to a district administrator, "PEP participants have gained added insights into the crucial role of principals in ensuring that all of their students have maximum opportunities to learn." Further, she believed that the program gave "aspiring and new principals exposure to current thinking regarding a principal's responsibility to ensure the education of all children." A member of the instructional team asserted that emphasis on "social justice is included in book studies, discussions, and application of learnings." Attention to this concept is "especially important in a high-needs district [where] 'Success For All' is the district's vision, a constant reminder about meeting the needs of all students." This focus was also apparent to a program participant who wrote: "All cohort members and their ideas are equally important in PEP. A large portion of the initial training is dedicated to building a belief that all stakeholders come to the table as equals, and that belief is protected throughout the experience." In other words, social justice was not only discussed, but also modeled.

A veteran principal who participated in the first cohort and served as a mentor for the second cohort posited that conducting school-based inquiry projects forced all participants to concentrate on instructional leadership. Additionally, the experiences helped him discover that some of his assumptions may have created barriers to understanding accountability issues at his own school:

> [The program] has helped all participants narrow our focus to strategies that will impact student achievement in each of our schools. It has placed greater focus on being instructional leaders in our buildings... The action research activities have taught us how to withdraw personal assumptions [when] looking at data, strategies, etc. It has taught me that raw data can help determine true weaknesses and help find solutions.

A middle school principal developed a new perspective about "high-stakes accountability" since participating in the program. He explained further that "PEP has shown us that by being positive with our teachers, we can positively influence each individual student in our building."

Because participants worked in both elementary and secondary schools during their clinical practices, they "see how different grade-level schools function" and "view various forms of instruction." Like many secondary school educators, a high school administrator had not spent any time working in an elementary school. The program helped him to view PreK-12 schooling as a continuum and to consider possibilities for improving all levels:

> Being in schools allows PEP participants to see what is going on in high schools [and] in elementary schools. Seeing the difference may actually help bridge the gap between the [differences in] instruction... High schools may benefit by more hands-on activities, enthusiasm, and well-organized classroom instruction with centers or

> stations to break up otherwise monotonous lessons. On the flip side, [visiting] high school settings may trigger thoughts [for elementary educators] about how to better prepare students for their high school careers.

The program expanded understanding of instructional leadership because participants learned by observing teaching in different settings and by helping colleagues toward a common goal of improving all schools in the district. Further, according to an elementary principal, the program provided "a curriculum tailored to the need of [rural school districts in eastern Kentucky]."

A Title I coordinator posited that the program provided multiple opportunities for participants to discover ways to ensure equal learning opportunities for all students:

> Closing education gaps and overcoming barriers have been important topics to the cohort. All members of PEP are aware that these inequities exist and [that] they must be eradicated as much as possible. PEP has provided literature, videos, guest speakers, and dialogue to help address the issues of social justice. I feel the participants have gained more insight into the problems, and we have been provided strategies to making learning equal for all students.

According to an assistant high school principal who participated as both a cohort member and a mentor, PEP emphasized that educational leaders must address high-stakes accountability: "The message sent is that we must reach all kids—no matter their age, race, or socioeconomic background. The bottom line is that it is our responsibility to teach all students." The program allowed participants to "see theory actually in practice" and united "people with a common cause [that] brings about successful results."

Rather than simply reading about and discussing social justice issues, cohort members worked in different grade-level settings where they were able to observe and interact with principals as they handled equity issues. The inquiry projects explored authentic student learning concerns and required participants to review literature, collect and analyze data from multiple sources, and report study findings related to assuring equitable learning opportunities for all. The fact that schools used the findings to plan action for school improvement was an added benefit.

Providing Adequate Learning Opportunities

The PEP curriculum is based upon school improvement and leadership for change, which requires exploration of policy assumptions and issues and discussion about accountability. Significant differences between student testing based on state guidelines in KERA and federal requirements in NCLB often resulted in lively debates during cohort meetings. While not a concept specifically included in the curriculum, availability of adequate resources often emerged as a topic because both practicing and aspiring principals realized that their performance as school leaders and classroom teachers was influenced by availability of resources. The following discussion is based upon participants' responses to two questions about adequate funding posed on a closing questionnaire.

The first prompt was: "Are adequate resources available to support student achievement? Please explain your answer." A surprising result was that well over half the respondents indicated that adequate resources were available for regular programs; those responding "yes" tended to be working in administrative positions. Despite answering in the affirmative, several principals raised frustrations about not having sufficient funds to provide experiential learning, which raised questions about the respondents' understanding of adequacy.

Not surprising were the predominately "yes" responses to the second prompt: "If your school received more funding, would your students achieve at a higher level? Please explain your answer." According to the varied comments, increased funding would be used for "improving instruction" by hiring "more instructional assistants to work individually with students to keep them from being 'left behind'," and to "reduce class size" to help "close gaps" in learning achievement. Respondents also asserted that "more funding would allow students to experience more off-campus educational activities, more hands-on learning, more first-hand experiences" and allow schools "to purchase additional resources" and "provide more authentic professional development experiences" for staff. With additional funds, an assistant superintendent would hire "music teachers [to] spend extra time with primary students" and "more primary teachers [to] focus on reading and math skills."

While the district leaders have worked diligently over the past five years to acquire additional funding through grants and other resources to enhance instructional programs and professional development, the financial realities in eastern Kentucky simply cannot be ignored. With widespread welfare dependency and social challenges created by unemployment and poverty, Pike County in many ways faces issues similar to those in inner cities. However, a significant difference between impoverished inner city schools and those in eastern Kentucky is that a district like Pike County must solve its problems through internal efforts because the Appalachian Mountains isolate it from metropolitan areas where external support services might be more readily available. The district-initiated effort to improve school leadership is not changing the problems, but rather, changing perceptions about the problems for those charged with finding solutions. Based upon in-progress assessments by stakeholder groups and recent student performances on state accountability testing, this advanced leadership preparation program is a success.

Ensuring Equitable Opportunities for Learning: Lessons Learned

Action by the United States Supreme Court and high courts in many states has established that all children are to be afforded equal opportunities to learn in public schools. Toward this end, the Kentucky General Assembly enacted KERA and established a formula that created greater equity with regard to the funding available to educate all students in public school across the Commonwealth. However, neither legislative nor judicial action can change the demographic and social conditions inherent in specific regions. Districts that serve communities where poverty and unemployment are pervasive must find their own unique solutions to insure that all students learn at appropriately high levels.

PEP is an example of a university-district partnership created to train school leaders in instructional leadership, action research, and collaborative problem solving in order to successfully impact student achievement. The program is structured upon best practices related to principal preparation and implemented through efforts by a team of dedicated educators. It provides a unique opportunity for continuing leadership development for veteran, novice, and prospective

principals in a rural high-need school district. Participants work together in risk-safe learning environments of closed cohorts, regularly apply their new learnings in authentic school settings, and then reflect upon their experiences when they come back together during biweekly workshops. Mentors—both in the field and in the classroom—help them unravel the complexities of the contemporary principalship and guide them in exploring ways to practice instructional leadership.

To be truly successful, systemic education reform must change the values, beliefs, and behaviors of education professionals.[34] With its emphasis on a vision of success for all students, best practices in school leadership, and comprehensive action research, PEP challenges participants to assess critically their dispositions and practices and then modify them in order to maximize student achievement. The program curriculum creates links across leadership practices and accountability expectations that are at the heart of KERA and NCLB. Through implementation of PEP, a foundation for a changed culture throughout PCPS is being built. Its sustained success will be measured by the achievement of the students over subsequent years. Future research will explore program influence on measures of student performance, the outputs of the educational system, and the

[1] Jacob E. Adams, Jr., "Resource Equity and Educational Resources." in *All Children Can Learn: Lessons from the Kentucky Reform Experience*, Roger S. Pankratz and Joseph M. Petrosko, Eds. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 30.

[2] Adams, 34.

[3] *Rose v. Council for Better Education*, 60 Ky. 1289, 790 S.W.2d 186 (Ky. 1989), 215.

[4] Jack D. Foster, *Redesigning Public Education: The Kentucky Experiences* (Lexington, Kentucky: Kentucky Diversified Services, 1999), 1.

[5] Patricia J. Kannapel, Lola Aagaard, Pamelia Coe, and Cynthia A. Reeves, *Elementary Change: Moving Toward Systemic School Reform in Rural Kentucky* (Charleston, West Virginia: AEL, 2000); Legislative Research Commission, *A Guide to the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990* (Lexington, Kentucky: 1990); Pankratz and Petrosko, *All Children Can Learn*.

[6] W. Blake Haselton and John L. Keedy, "The Kentucky Education Reform Act: A Comparison of Equity and Adequacy Outcomes in Kentucky between Plaintiff and Non-plaintiff School Districts," A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, April, 2002; Lawrence O. Picus, Allan Odden, and Mark Fermanich, *Assessing the Equity of Kentucky's SEEK Formula: A Ten-year Analysis*, A report prepared for the Kentucky Department of Education, September 2001, http://www.education.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/e6ujfuf2mh3bcq7kozgyfdd63crzefs4e2mv7pgk2corew6uwpjgdqgsvrh4mdcknofxaei5wwjnibwbii2zg5oyvrd/TenYearSEEKEquityAnalysisdraft5a.doc.

[7] James Hilston, "Online Graphic: Distressed Counties in Appalachia," *PGNews* (November 26, 2000), http://www.post-gazette.com/headlines/20001126graphicb9.asp; Andrew M. Isserman, "Socio-Economic Review of Appalachia," *Appalachia Then and Now: An Update of the Realities of Deprivation Reported to the President in 1964* (Washington, D.C.: Appalachian Regional Commission, 1996), http://www.arc.gov/research/pdf/then/pdf.

[8] Richard B. Drake, *A History of Appalachia* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001).

[9] U.S. Census Bureau, "Pike County Quickfacts from the U.S. Census Bureau," http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/21195.html.

[10] Diane N. Jones, "Appalachia's War: The Poorest of the Poor Struggle Back," *PG News* (November 6, 2000), http://www.post-gazette...nes/2000116appalachiamainnat2.asp.

[11] Drake, *A History of Appalachia*.

[12] U.S. Census Bureau, "Pike County Quickfacts."

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Drake, *A History of Appalachia*.

[16] Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Kentucky Kids Count* (Louisville, Kentucky: Kentucky Youth Associates, 2000).

[17] U.S. Census Bureau, "Pike County Quickfacts."

[18] Foster, *Redesigning Public Education*; Pankratz and Petrosko, *All Children Can Learn*.

[19] Council for Chief State School Officers, *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: Council for Chief State School Officers, 1996); Karen Hessel and John Holloway, *A Framework for School Leaders: Linking the ISLLC Standards to Practice* (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 2002).

[20] Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Alan Shoho, "Careful Selection of Aspiring Principals: An Exploratory Analysis of Leadership Preparation Program Admission Practices," in E*ducational Leadership: Knowing the Way, Showing the Way, Going the Way*, Twelfth Annual Yearbook of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Carolyn S. Carr and Connie L. Fulmer, Eds. (Lanham, Maryland, Scarecrow Education, 2004), 172-189; Donald Coleman, Deborah Copeland, and R.C. Adams, "University Education Administration Program Development: Administrative Skills vs. Achievement Standards as Predictors of Administrative Success," in *21st Century Challenges for School Administrators*, Theodore J. Kowalski and George Perreault, Eds. (Lanham, Maryland,: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 53-61; Theodore Creighton, "Lessons From the Performing Arts: Can Auditioning Help Improve the Selection Process in University Administration Preparation Programs in the 21st Century?" in Kowalski and Perreault, 101-112; Barbara L. Jackson and Carolyn Kelley, "Exceptional and Innovative Programs in Educational Leadership," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 38 (April 2002): 192-212; Joseph Murphy, *The Landscape of Leadership Preparation: Reframing the Education of School Administrators* (Thousand Oaks: California, Corwin Press, 1992); Joseph Murphy, *Preparing Tomorrow's School Leaders: Alternative Designs* (University Park, Pennsylvania: University Council for Educational Administration, 1993); Kent Peterson, "The Professional Development of Principals: Innovations and Opportunities," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 38 (April 2002): 213-232.

[21] Roger Hiemstra, Ed., "Creating Environments for Effective Adult Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No

50 (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1991); Institute for Educational Leadership, *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000); Rodney Muth, "Scholar-Practitioner Goals, Practices, and Outcomes: What Students and Faculty Need to Know and Be Able to Do, *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly* 1 (2002): 67-87; Rodney Muth, D. Banks, Joan Bonelli, Barbara Gaddis, Harriet Napierkowski, C. White, and Vicki Wood, "Toward an Instructional Paradigm: Recasting How Faculty Work and Students Learn," in Kowalski and Perreault, 29-53; Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1987); Sandra I. Stein and Liz Gewirtzman, *Principal Training on the Ground: Ensuring Highly Qualified Leadership* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2003).

[22] National Staff Development Council, *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn: Improving School Quality through Principal Professional Development* (Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, 2000).

[23] Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, "Becoming a Principal: Role Conception, Initial Socialization, Role-Identity Transformation, Purposeful Engagement," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 39 (October 2003): 468-503; Ronald L. Capasso and John C. Daresh, *The School Administration Handbook: Leading, Mentoring, and Participating in the Internship Program* (California: Corwin Press, 2001); Paula A. Cordeiro and Ellen Smith-Sloan, "Apprenticeships for Administrative Interns: Learning to Talk Like a Principal," A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 1995; Gary M. Crow and Catherine Glascock, "Socialization to a New Conception of the Principalship," *Journal of Educational Administration* 33:1(1995): 22-43.

[24] Theresa. M. Bey and C. Thomas Holmes, Eds., *Mentoring: Contemporary Principles and Issues* (Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Educators, 1992); Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Rodney Muth, "Leadership Mentoring in Clinical Practice: Role Socialization, Professional Development, and Capacity Building," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 40 (October 2004): 468-494; Carol A. Mullen and Dale W. Lick, Eds., *New directions in Mentoring: Creating a Culture of Synergy* (London: Falmer Press, 1999).

[25] Gary Crow and L. Joseph Matthews, *Finding One's Way: How Mentoring Can Lead to Dynamic Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, 1998); L. Joseph Matthews and Gary M. Crow, *Being and Becoming a Principal: Role Conceptions for Contemporary Principals and Assistant Principals* (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 2003).

[26] Stephen P. Gordon, *Professional Development for School Improvement: Empowering Learning Communities* (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 2004); J. Merrell Hansen, Joe Matthews, and Barry Stark, "The Power of More Than One," *Principal Leadership* 3 (September, 2002): 30-33.

[27] John J. Lane, Ed., *The Making of a Principal* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1984); Carol A. Mullen, Stephen. P. Gordon, Bobbie J. Greenlee, and Robert H. Anderson, "Capacities for School Leadership: Emerging Trends in the Literature," *International Journal of Educational Reform* 11 (Spring 2002): 158-198; Flora I. Ortiz, *Career Patterns in Education: Women, Men and Minorities in Public School Administration* (New York: Praeger, 1982); Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[28] Cynthia J. Norris and Bruce Barnett, "Cultivating a New Leadership Paradigm: From Cohorts to Communities," A paper presented at the Annual Convention of the University Council for Educational Administration, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October, 1994.

[29] Bruce G. Barnett, Margaret R. Basom, Diane M. Yerkes, and Cynthia J. Norris, "Cohorts in Educational Leadership Programs: Benefits, Difficulties, and the Potential for Developing School Leaders," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 36 (April 2000): 255-282; Margaret Basom, Diane Yerkes, Cynthia Norris, and Bruce Barnett, "Using Cohorts as a Means for Developing Transformational Leaders," *Journal of School Leadership* 6 (January 1996): 99-112; Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Rodney Muth, "Effects of Cohorts on Learners," *Journal of School Leadership* 13 (2003): 621-643; Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Rodney Muth, "On Being a Cohort Leader: Curriculum Integration, Program Coherence, and Shared Responsibility," *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development* 16, 77-95.

[30] Margaret Basom and Diane Yerkes, "Modeling Community through Cohort Development," A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, Washington, April 2001; Norris and Barnett, "Cultivating a New Leadership Paradigm."

[31] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 1998); Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 1995); Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods,* 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1994).

[32] David R. Krathwohl, *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research: An Integrated Approach*, 2d ed. (New York: Longman, 1998), 26.

[33] Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, "Principals Excellence Program: Advanced Professional Development for Certified School Leaders," A paper presented at the Annual Convention of the University Council for Educational Administration, Portland, Oregon, November 2003; Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, "Kentucky's Collaborative Model for Developing School Leaders for Rural High-Need Schools," A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, California, April, 2004; Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, "Principals Excellence Program: Developing Effective School Leaders through Unique University-District Partnership," *NCPEA Education Leadership Review* 5 (Summer 2004): 24-36; Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Lawrence W. Allen, "Advanced Leadership Development of Administrator-Certified Practitioners through University-District Partnership: Mid-Progress Assessments by District Leadership Team," A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration, Branson, Missouri, August 2004; Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Brenda Maynard, "Meeting the Learning Needs of Students: A Rural High-Need School District's Systemic Leadership Development Initiative, *The Rural Educator* (in press); Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, Kentucky's Collaborative Model for Developing School Leaders for Rural High-Need Schools."

[34] Robert Evans, *The Human Side of School Change* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

"The Earth is Not Flat Any More": Reflections on the Impact of a Rural/Urban Educational Leadership Exchange on Place-Based Instruction

Cynthia J. Norris
with the Graduate Studies Cohort[1]

Why we got geography?

Because we go from place to place. Because the earth use to be flat and had four corners, and you could jump off from any of the corners.

But now the earth is not flat any more. Now it is round all over. Now it is a globe, a ball, round all over, and we would all fall off it and tumble away into space if it wasn't for the magnetic poles. And when you dance it is the North Pole or the South Pole pulling on your feet like magnets to keep your feet on the earth.

And that's why we got geography.

And it's nice to have it that way.

- from "Lines Written for Gene Kelley to Dance to"
by Carl Sandburg[2]

Introduction

In May of 2004, an educational administration doctoral cohort of ten East Tennessee K-12 teachers and administrators visited a sample of Cincinnati public schools. This Rural/Urban Educational Leadership Exchange[3] was coordinated through the educational administration departments of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville (UTK) and the University of Cincinnati (UC) as part of the Urban Educational Leadership Program based at UC. The purpose of the educational exchange was to allow the participants to enhance their understanding of the difference location makes on K-12 education, discover underlying themes that transcend location, and seek out a "compassionate sense of place" with members from both groups sharing their own educational stories, settings, and realities.[4]

Cynthia J. Norris is Associate Professor in Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the University of Tennessee. The members of the Graduate Studies Cohort are Alison Buehler, John Dalton, Steve Farmer, Elton Frerichs, Chris Henderson, Monty Howell, Teresa Robinson, Jeff Romanczuk, Larry Stein, and Vicki Violette.

At its heart, the Knoxville/Cincinnati exchange was a vehicle for the two doctoral groups to learn together. Fullan has observed that such learning is meaning-making that requires a radically new way of approaching education, one that guides the development of individual minds through many minds working together.[5] According to Furman and Starrat, the only way to achieve our visions of schooling is to commit to work together on important problems, even with those who are different from us, and to commit to share our stories and respect the views of others.[6] As rural educational leaders, the UTK cohort planned to visit various schools in the urban setting to gain insights from these alternative perspectives that would help them look at their own places through new lenses. Next spring, it is hoped that the UC cohort will experience schools in a rural context by traveling to East Tennessee.

The affective influence of place in education is critical. The rural/urban program was attempting, as Gruenewald stated, to "contribute to a theory of place as a multidisciplinary construct for cultural analysis."[7] Ross indicated that in the comparative learning process, individuals learn not only what they study, but they learn how to gain knowledge from each other cross-culturally.[8] The purpose of this article is to examine the process adult learners go through when they leave their familiar place and engage in learning with others in a strange or unfamiliar context.

The schools the UTK cohort visited in Cincinnati, Ohio, coordinated by members from the UC cohort, included a Montessori-based middle and high school, a traditional instructional methods high school, and an elementary school with a foreign language-based curriculum. Each school exposed the group to a variety of teaching styles and school cultures. After the visits, the two university groups engaged in dialog about the impact of these experiences, shared struggles across their different educational contexts, and found common ground between the two settings. Upon returning to the Knoxville, each student in the UTK cohort produced a written reflection about the experiences in Cincinnati that had the greatest impact on his/her educational beliefs or practices. Students analyzed the experiences both cognitively (evaluating them) and affectively (adding in perceptions and interpretations about the events). According to Gruenewald, people are capable of perceiving places and learning from that direct experience.[9] Therefore, the reflections concluded with each student creating a future action plan based on what was learned. The group decided that while the experiences in Cincinnati themselves were worthwhile, the process of learning by leaving a familiar place and entering into learning in a new context with others was invaluable. The written reflections were then collected and analyzed for themes of learning to produce this article.

Review of Literature

Ross described a long-term alliance in *An Opportunity for Cross-Cultural, Project-Based Learning on the Internet in My Place, Your Place, and Our Place*, a curriculum and instruction model that provides experiential learning opportunities in both local and global contexts.[10] The concept of *My Place*, learning how to function in one's own culture, is essential for survival and seems natural and logical. Learning or understanding diverse cultures, *Your Place*, can be a challenge to individuals who live in isolated communities. An approach to global learning can be accomplished through a personal relationship between two cultures. In this one-on-one comparative learning process, individuals learn not only what they learn but also how to

learn from each other. This final stage in the learning process is *Our Place*, the world that all people have in common. The overall goal is to examine and understand from each *place* what is fundamental to *all places* and to learn and apply the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills that will allow individuals to be productive in *Our Place*.[11]

Although the influence of place has been studied in broad contexts,[12] Gruenewald asserted, "Educational research, theory, and practice need to pay more attention to places."[13] Indeed, although colleges of education at many universities have partnerships with local K-12 school systems, these collaborations tend to depend on specific grant funding and have a short-term focus.[14] Ross's emphasis is not on educating students to compete in the global economy, but on preparing them to cooperate in global maintenance and management. Gruenewald set place apart from a mere locality in stating that "location" is space and time dependent; "place" is not.[15] As Ross's manuscript makes plain, place is not bound by country or nationality.[16]

Furman and Starrat maintained that the anticipation of the commitment to work together with people who are different from oneself; to communicate and engage in dialogue; to share stories; and to respect others' views is an important educational process.[17] Ross, Smith, and Roberts suggested that another important piece of the educational process is the commitment to collective inquiry in a learning community.[18] This is enhanced by collaborating with educational professionals who live and work in very different situations. Senge, Kleiner, Ross, Smith, and Roberts theorized that when this level of collaboration occurs, all members of the groups stand to gain insight, empathy, understanding, and ideas for future innovation.[19]

In an age when living and working in a global community is accepted in the educational system, Ramler encourages educators to lead learners to understand and respect cultures other than their own so that they can live and work with people from all around the shrinking globe.[20] According to Ramler, learning to see through the eyes, minds, and hearts of others is important to the process of education.[21] Gruenewald argued that what we learn and come to know is shaped by the places we experience and the attention we give to other places.[22] Gruenewald continued that it is the gained perspectives that can advance theory, research, and practice in education.[23] The aim of becoming more aware of places is to extend our perception of pedagogy and responsibility outward from ourselves. Additionally, Gruenewald maintained that the expanded knowledge becomes more significant to the lived experience of students and teachers.[24] Responsibility is redefined and conceptualized so that other places matter to educators, students, and citizens in concrete ways. Our expanded knowledge forges within us the ability to become more responsible citizens within our own place.

Methods

Much work has been done on how place-based teaching and learning impact children; however, the findings in this study append a richness of experience to the theory of place-conscience education using the context and characters of adult education and adult learners.[25] This research was an exploratory case study. The researchers sought to gain insight into the development of both cognitive and affective understandings of place that resulted from the group's visits to the Cincinnati schools. Ten reflections were collected from the cohort members upon their return from these visits to three schools in Cincinnati. Each reflection focused on the reciprocal impact that the visit had on the perceptions of the students' own place. The students analyzed their experiences in the Cincinnati schools, and the resultant changes occurring in their perceptions of their own places precipitated by these experiences.

Using Maxwell's categorizing strategy of qualitative data analysis, the researchers attempted to gain further understanding of the data.[26] The reflections were then analyzed using Ethnograph software.[27] The researchers developed codes from the reflections and Gruenewald's theory of place by using Merriam's constant comparative analysis.[28,29] Each code went through several iterations as the researchers gained further understanding of the data. The codes were then constructed into themes under Merriam's technique of category construction.[30] Groups of codes with recurring patterns were assembled into the themes that served as the general structure for understanding the process of reciprocal reflection that the cohort underwent on the trip. These themes were also developed using an iterative process of constantly revisiting the raw data to confirm and revise the themes.

The researchers also employed Fielding and Fielding's investigator triangulation method through three researchers independently analyzing the same set of data.[31] Once the independent analyses were complete, the researchers then met to come to an agreement on the final analysis. In addition to the triangulation method employed in the study, trustworthiness was furthered by the use of verbatim quotes from the documents, an audit trail, and the researchers' reaching the point of saturation.

The members of the UTK cohort consist of educational administrators and educators working in east Tennessee schools or districts. They include three principals, an assistant superintendent, two teachers, a special education administrator, a director of student living at a residential school for the deaf, a central office science supervisor, and a federal programs coordinator. All ten members are white, and over half of them have lived and worked in rural or suburban settings throughout their educational careers. Although East Tennessee has economic diversity equivalent to any urban area, until recently very little racial, ethnic, or linguistic diversity existed. Changing demographics, new educational challenges, and the recent legislation of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*[32] sparked the interest in members of the UTK cohort to go out and see how other schools and districts were coping with these issues. In addition, the recognition that urban districts and schools probably had a lot of experience in dealing with issues of funding, meeting the needs of diverse learners, and providing innovative programming options appealed to the cohort. A professor at UTK, who had worked on the initial urban research center in Houston, contacted a professor engaged in the current urban research center at the University of Cincinnati (UC), and the Urban/Rural Exchange was formed. The educational administration and policy cohort at UC agreed to host the UTK cohort and to introduce them to several urban schools in the area.

Findings and Analysis

The trip to Cincinnati generated excitement among members of the UTK cohort about the possibilities for schools and enthusiasm about possible future collaboration at the higher education level between educators in different places. One member said she felt a sense of renewal and hope upon returning from this trip. In addition, the learning that occurred on the trip carried over into class discussions back at UTK where student frequently cited examples from their experiences in Cincinnati. While the overall feeling about the ex-

perience was positive, people do not generally encounter unfamiliar settings eagerly. This case study examined the stages through which UTK cohort members progressed in order to reach deeper understandings in education and a "compassionate sense of place."

Adventuring Into the Unknown

While excited about the prospect of learning from educators in a place very different from their own, the UTK cohort approached the trip cautiously. Fear of the unknown is a universal trait and is evidenced in some of the reflections below from members of the UT cohort:

> I immediately developed a nervous and somewhat anxious feeling about what we would encounter in our school visits. I have never visited a school outside of mid-South. I envisioned the schools being totally land-locked with no resemblance to what I know to be a school setting: large green fields, playgrounds with brightly colored play sets, football stadiums, and outdoor basketball courts, just to name a few of my thoughts.
>
> Having lived all my life in the South–having worked all my life in small rural schools–the idea of visiting a large urban city like Cincinnati was at first daunting.
>
> The Cincinnati Public Schools are approximately 70% African-American. Most of our school systems are 85% to 90% white. This was a sort of culture shock for those of us who had spent their careers in the rural South.
>
> I experienced a whole gamut of feelings and emotions in our three days in Cincinnati. There was fear and trepidation just from the fact of going into inner city schools and operating within the inner city.

However, as Palmer wrote, moving through this fear is a necessary step in encountering new knowledge:

> If we are to open up a space for knowing, we must be alert to our fear of not knowing... we must see that not knowing is simply the first step toward truth, that the anxiety created by our ignorance calls not for instant answers but for an adventure into the unknown.[33]

As evidenced in the reflections of the UTK cohort below, leaving one's place and adventuring into the unknown opens the mind to new possibilities, widens the lens through which one views the world, and stimulates learning:

> The journey influenced me to "think outside the box."
>
> The experience of going outside of your normal environment and looking at how education is offered in another community provides new insights.
>
> Overall, it was important for me to see how other educators in other places operate. It opened my vistas to a wider realm of possibility.
>
> I want to end with a note about how stepping outside of your own context enables you to put on a whole new set of glasses, to see what you are blinded to by habit and routine, and to experience anew your own reality in another place.

The "lessons learned" from this experience are a direct result of coming into contact with the unknown. Palmer used the biblical example: "...God is always using the stranger to introduce the strangeness of truth."[34] Going into a strange place enabled members of the UT cohort to encounter some new truths:

> I have learned that the idea of care transcends all boundaries: urban; rural; elementary; middle; high; races; and educational levels.
>
> This entire experience has brought home to me the importance of being a life-long learner. Many of the problems that we saw in Cincinnati are the results of people doing things the way we have always done. Many of the good things that we saw in Cincinnati are the results of people who are life-long learners.
>
> The viewpoint from an observer's seat enabled me to see the ills of my teaching hidden to me from the viewpoint of the teacher's podium. I will take this new perspective and strive to be a better teacher for it.
>
> The experiences that we each described in our school visits will have a significant influence on how we view the individual problems that we face in our schools and school systems.
>
> I felt that the overall experience was exceptional. As a profession, educators tend to want to stay in their comfort levels. This was outside of our realm of experience as a whole, and I feel it opened our eyes to a wider world. Not only that, it made us appreciate our own place.

The investigation of this process provided many useful insights. Understanding this process allowed us to get more from our experiences of places outside our own. Reflection brought to light many differences but also allowed the students to see that these differences were unifying instead of divisive. The process of grappling with the incongruencies of several places can lead to greater comfort in knowing that we exist not in "my place" or "your place", but in "our place".

Connecting and Grappling

When people go to a strange place or adventure into the unknown, they instinctively engage in two thought processes. First, they make any connection they can between the strange place and their own familiar place. They cling to any similarities they find because these connections help make sense of what they encounter. It is the process described often in the work of such theorists as Dewey: working from what is known in order to understand the unknown.[35] Members of the UTK cohort described some of the connections they made to their place while they experienced urban schools as follows:

> Witnessing the stark contrast between the Russian classroom and the ESL [English as a Second Language] room made me reflect on the situation at my school. I first thought of my own classroom.
>
> We do have a few schools where the environment is [discouraging], and we have teachers who have the teacher's heart to work and remain working at those schools.

> I felt as though I was in a school setting that I knew and had experienced before. The building was obviously in need of repair and maintenance, but I had seen this before also.
>
> I learned that the problems that we face in our schools are similar to the problems that the educators in Cincinnati face daily as well. With the standards movement in education, every school faces the challenges of meeting the standards, and therefore the problems that arise are very similar in nature no matter where a school is located or what programs that they use.

The second thought process people engage in surfaces from the differences and inconsistencies they encounter between their familiar place, or what they believe should occur, and a strange place, or what actually occurs. They begin to grapple with the questions that result from uncomfortable feelings of disequilibria. According to Sizer and Sizer, "Grappling is a necessary balancing act" that provides a "distant mirror, the meaning of one's immediate condition viewed against the sweep of human and environmental experience, past and present."[36] Evidence from the reflections below confirmed that members of the UTK cohort indeed engaged in the process of grappling with what they encountered:

> I am reporting what I saw and experienced and asking if this is the way things should be.
>
> How long might Palmer's "heart of a teacher" beat in these [troubled] schools?[37]
>
> I was sure that students of this age could learn a second language, but given the setting and the situation, I was a little unsure about how speaking Russian could help these children to become successful in life.
>
> What could their lives as students be like if given the chance? What would it take to make these kids into partners in the pursuit of their own possibilities rather than faceless enemies who must be herded through hallways?
>
> The implication of school choice as the government's answer is troubling. I am also disturbed by the realization that driving just a few miles across a beautiful city finds such diverse educational opportunities.

Making connections to what we already know and grappling with inconsistencies between our beliefs and the realities we encounter is a powerful tool in creating the necessary stage for reflection and, ultimately, deeper understandings. Dewey advocated reflective thinking, emphasizing that "one can think reflectively only when... willing to endure suspense and to undergo the trouble of searching."[38] Making connections and grappling with inconsistencies occurs naturally when we leave our familiar contexts and adventure into the unknown.

Dispelling Old Myths and Creating New Stories

Palmer wrote, "...before we encounter truth, we must first wrestle with the demons of untruth..."[39] Members of the UTK cohort found themselves in exactly this position as they entered and observed urban schools in Cincinnati. They had come to this new place full of ideas about what they would see and how they would feel, as follows:

> I had a preconceived notion that the majority of students in the Cincinnati schools had a predetermined fate in life—a troubled home life, little parental support, and no hope for a bright, successful future.

What they found dispelled firmly held myths about inner-city schools, children, and education. For example, the UTK cohort were taken aback by the lack of dress codes, air conditioning (in May), and facility upkeep in several settings. However, in discussions following the visits, the cohort came to realize that these physical criteria were incidental to the actual process of learning:

> After seeing these three schools, I realize that effective learning and teaching can occur in any setting. Students' success in education depends not on the location of buildings, but on the expectations, caring, and passion of the adults who have the responsibility and opportunities to teach them.
>
> The trip to Cincinnati, Ohio to tour three urban schools was a perfect example of the reason one should not stereotype. Before our visit, I assumed we would see typical urban schools that reflected inadequate facilities, apathy, and behavior problems among students, and lack of student learning, ineffective teaching, and inferior leadership. What I observed caused me to change my previously held beliefs about inner-city schools and the wonderful opportunities that some students have in some of these settings.
>
> These kids are having fun. They are becoming fluent in an influential language, and they attend an inner-city kindergarten.
>
> I felt a lot of positive emotions... a sense of awe, warmth, and excitement as I watched these children perform wildly beyond my personal expectations.
>
> With my skepticism mounting, we strolled toward our first classroom visitation. When we entered building B, my first impression was immediately invalidated. Hanging on the walls of the hallways were poems written in Chinese and maps in Arabic. I thought something special really could be going on here.

The process of dispelling old myths allows a space to open up where new beliefs can be born. Gruenewald, in his conclusions about the impact of place-conscious education stated, "What we know is, in large part, shaped by the places we experience and the quality we give them."[40] When we leave familiar places, dispel myths about different places, and encounter quality in new ways, we are then able to create new beliefs, understandings, and appreciations that apply to both places:

> I came away realizing anew that the greatest variable in student learning and success is the teacher. I also realized that great teaching and learning can be occurring, but standardized test scores can be low.

> This youngster had an interest in what he was learning. He loved that others were watching him. His actions, demeanor, interest, and effort just stood out to me, and I could not help but begin to realize how learning the Russian language had influenced this young student. My question of what benefit is teaching a foreign language to students was being answered right in front of my face!
>
> I now realize through the experience of visiting a different school system that I am to the point where I am buying into the reconstructivist philosophy, or rather, it is becoming clearer that this is the one means of supporting substantial changes in our educational system.
>
> This experience has greatly affected me as an administrator. I now realize how easy it is to establish expectations that are not consistent for every student within my school. Just because a student has low socioeconomic status does not excuse them from achieving at the same level as every other student.
>
> The trip to Cincinnati—taken to provide two groups of educational professionals, one urban, one rural, different experiences to approach learning—turned out to uncover profound insights about my work and my self-concept.

Not all new insights or beliefs from visiting another place occur in the shape of realizations. They are also formed by confirming hunches or previously held beliefs and by witnessing philosophy in action, as follows:

> The experience of visiting actual places of learning that embody and embrace a child-centered, caring, and truly social reconstructive purpose of education confirms what I believe about schooling, children, and the educational future to which this country should aspire.
>
> I confirmed a lot of previous beliefs, strengthened others, and encountered completely new experiences that help bolster my philosophy and beliefs about education and about kids.
>
> The experience reinforced my belief that a new language should be taught at a young age.
>
> I have had a gut feeling about the possibilities of taking any kind of child and motivating them in the right environment to exceed our wildest educational hopes. My shelves are full of books that tell me about examples of people who have created such places and kids who have emerged from them. I have studied, almost fanatically, how to make places like this come into being and how to sustain them against an educational agenda that seeks to destroy them, but until this trip, I had never seen one in real life. Now I have a realistic face to place on my dreamy possibilities for schools.

Even confirming educational hunches can be inspiring to veteran educators who are often isolated in their own worlds of practice. Having a true story example on which to hang your educational philosophy is unfortunately rare in the minds of many educators.

Becoming Pedagogical Connoisseurs

Even though members of the UTK cohort were afforded a new set of lenses from which to view education in action, they framed what they saw through familiar contexts. As educators and administrators, they took extensive note of pedagogical, leadership, and programming aspects of the schools they visited and ultimately made judgments about their merit, as follows:

> The children seemed thrilled about their learning. The songs, dances, and games that filled the 50-minute class excited the students about their learning. The students' exhilaration was only heightened by the extraordinary energy and enthusiasm displayed by the teachers.
>
> It was amazing to see the students so actively engaged in their learning and teachers who obviously took great pride in their work.
>
> The reality is that creating a meaningful educational experience is an awful lot of work.
>
> First, leadership within the school had to be both visionary for the principal and participatory for the teachers, parents, and students.

Delving into their own intellectual resources and educational experiences, the UTK students recognized good and poor practice:

> The Russian classroom could serve as a model for Greene's ideas on the integration of art and imagination in a classroom.[41] The ESL room seemed embedded in what Glasser refers to as stimulus/response teaching.[42] The ESL students were coerced into doing as the teacher wanted based on the fear of reprisal whereas the Russian students chose to participate because the learning was fun. I was amazed that two classrooms, especially in such close proximity, could reflect such different philosophies in teaching and learning.
>
> They were able to engage the students in what seemed an effortless manner. The students seemed to be developing a love for learning. The teachers seemed to be creating child-centered learning. The focus was on the needs of the students and on doing whatever was necessary for those students to learn.
>
> We saw innovative curriculum, an experimental curriculum, and a [status quo] curriculum.
>
> The programs we experienced at the language school provided an atmosphere that drew you into the curriculum. From the first graders in the Russian class to the fifth graders in the Japanese class, the energy was high, the motivation was intrinsic, and the learning was evident. The whole of the instructional program was what one would hope to find in every classroom.
>
> The faces at this school reveal a realized *I Have a Dream* speech; the human capital exceeds it. This is the kind of school people make excuses for [not matching]. It is the kind of school people say their schools could imitate if only...

These judgments appeared to lead to an expanded pedagogical knowledge base for the UTK participants. This trend reflects Gruenewald's insistence that we learn "to listen to what places are telling us– and to respond as informed citizens– this is the pedagogical challenge of place-conscious education."[43] Students commented:

> I was most impressed with the nontraditional ways that instruction was implemented, the respectfulness between teachers and students, the high level of support of students, the contracts between students and the school and between teachers and new teachers, the length of time students ride buses to go to this school, and the non-traditional curriculum.
>
> These students were not just being taught to speak a language. They were developing social skills, cultural awareness, and self-esteem, which is what we should be teaching every child in our country.
>
> Students in this school were getting a much more "well rounded" education than children in traditional schools.

Although the UTK cohort was not in Cincinnati to evaluate the schools visited, we can not avoid making judgments about what we see based on what is familiar to us. People seem wired to notice what is different about a new experience before they tune into what is similar about it. Perhaps this is why Ross cautions us to take the next step in this comparative, cross-cultural learning process: learn not only what there is to learn from each other, but also how to learn from each other.[44]

Choosing Between Comfort and Change

The final stage of the process through which the UT students progressed in their encounters in the Cincinnati schools was a fork in the road for most participants. When people visit unfamiliar places and are estranged from their familiar places, they have two choices. They either reject what they encounter and return to the comforts and familiarity of home, or they internalize new insights which compel them to want to create change. There is evidence of both in the reflections below:

> But the real take-away action plan for me is remembering to keep up with what is happening in urban K-12 education... from a safe distance.
>
> I believe that I went into this experience from the viewpoint that my situation was hopeless, and I have come away with a new feeling of thankfulness in one sense that we have a good of educational system.
>
> I have always felt that I was open and accepting, but I found myself thinking that Cincinnati was not a place where I could teach.
>
> I was shocked when someone in our group needed a restroom, and it had to be unlocked for him. Later, as we wandered down the hall, the security guard was told to go check the bathroom and to lock it back. At this point, I realized there were freedoms in our rural school setting that I take for granted.
>
> This trip reconfirmed my childhood decision to exit the urban setting I was born into as quickly as I could. Our aimless lunchtime drive around the streets of Cincinnati was enough to reinforce this. Cities always make me feel like I am slowly suffocating.

Gruenewald, in his discussion of the pedagogy of place asks, "What are our places telling us and teaching us about our possibilities?"[45] Visiting a place outside of your own can become a catalyst for creating a new vision that compels you to want to initiate change:

> I reflected on parts of my teaching that are disengaging and tried to think of ways to change them.
>
> I left Cincinnati with determination to tap into the resources that teachers in my school have and use them to the benefit of my students.
>
> I think of what might be if Knox County had Russian and Japanese language teachers who had the energy and caring of the four ladies we observed. Our students need this opportunity to grow beyond East Tennessee and appreciate diversity and cultures other than their own.
>
> The experience I have had in visiting three schools in the Cincinnati school system will influence my role as an administrator in my individual school as well as in the school system.

The reflections were overflowing with proof that adventuring into the unknown prompts growth and generates vision that has far-reaching implications:

> The vision to take the truth and the ideas from the place of Cincinnati to inspire me in my own educational place or setting and to compose my own stories of change and success is my hope.
>
> From this experience, I plan to work and teach to promote greater appreciation for people of different languages and/or cultures.
>
> The opportunities available to these students were what inspired me to look at ways to implement some of the curriculum into our schools in my district. The observation of these characteristics has inspired me to come back to my district and renew my efforts to motivate and inspire teachers and cultivate the passion needed to teach students effectively.
>
> I may or may not be able to fix students' dysfunctional home lives, but I can offer the adequate resources and support to ensure them a better life and a rewarding educational experience.
>
> I came away from my experiences in the Cincinnati school system inspired to work harder and do more than I had previously. I realized that the only barriers that I faced in my work were the blinders that I developed from not looking around at what was going on in the education community and my lack of desire to give a little more effort to achieve the goals that I had set for myself in my job as well as those that we had set for our school.

These future aspirations to action demonstrate one of the most powerful aspects of learning that occurred as a result of this place-conscious learning experience. Stepping outside of your routine, context, and familiar surroundings allows for a fresh perspective that inspires action.

Going Home

Based on the analysis of the reflections from members of the UTK cohort, it appears that adult learners go through a series of cognitive processes when they encounter familiar proceedings in an unfamiliar place. First, leaving your place and adventuring into the unknown opens your mind, widens your lens, and stimulates learning. Second, when we encounter a new context, we instinctively make connections to our own place, but we also begin to grapple with questions that emerge from the discomfort of confronting inconsistencies. Third, at this point we dispel old myths, create new beliefs, or confirm previous hunches that expand our understanding of an unknown phenomenon. Fourth, we eventually make judgments about the merit of what we see. Finally, we make a choice in our minds to either reject what we find and return to the comfort of what we know, or we internalize new insights that compel us to want to effect change.

Conclusion

A "compassionate sense of place" involves embracing an ethic of care incorporating interpersonal, cultural, and environmental elements into the understanding of one's self and one's place, the widening of the individual and collective moral vision and sense of community.[46] However, the work of this particular learning community has only begun. Admittedly, visiting only three schools in a system that has more than 80 can be characterized only as a good start. The Cincinnati cohort is due to make its initial visit to East Tennessee early in 2005 to complete the first cycle. The Urban/Rural Exchange is still in the early *My Place/Your Place* phases. Our long-term goal, though, is to find *Our Place*. We want to become the kind of adult learning community for whom any single place is too small in our quest to keep K-12 teaching as fresh as it is challenging.

Endnotes

[1] Author's Note: This Graduate Studies Cohort consists of two elementary principals, one high school principal, a district science coordinator, assistant superintendent, federal programs coordinator, special education administrator, director of student living at the Tennessee School for the Deaf, and two teachers. We arrived with very little in common, took all our dissertation coursework together for two years, and became a very strong learning community.

[2] Carl Sandburg, *The Sandburg Treasury: Prose and Poetry for Young People* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: 1950), 222.

[3] See http://web.utk.edu/~aramp/ruexchange.

[4] Randolph Haluza-DeLay, "Developing Compassionate Sense of Place," http://csopconsulting.tripod.com/envcap.

[5] Michael Fullan, *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

[6] Gail Furman and Robert Starrat, "Leadership for Democratic Community in Schools," in *The Educational Leadership Challenge: Redefining Leadership for the 21st Century*, Joe Murphy, Ed. (Chicago, Illinois: National Society for the Study of Education, 2002): 105-133.

[7] David A. Gruenewald, "Foundations of Place: A Multidisciplinary Framework for Place-Conscious Education," *American Educational Research Journal* 40 (Fall 2003): 619.

[8] Glenda J. Ross, "An Opportunity for Cross-Cultural, Project-Based Learning on the Internet in My Place, Your Place, and Our Place," A manuscript submitted for publication.

[9] Gruenewald, "Foundations of Place."

[10] Ross, "An Opportunity for Cross-Cultural, Project-Based Learning."

[11] Ibid.

[12] Winifred Gallagher, *The Power of Place: How Our Surroundings Shape Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993).

[13] Gruenewald, 621.

[14] Russell Olwell "Schools and Universities: A New Social Contract," *Education Week* (June 16, 2004), 43.

[15] Gruenewald, "Foundations of Place."

[16] Ross, "An Opportunity for Cross-Cultural, Project-Based Learning."

[17] Furman and Starrat, "Leadership for Democratic Community in Schools,"

[18] Rick Ross, Bryan Smith, and Charlotte Roberts, "The Wheel of Learning: Mastering the Rhythm of a Learning Organization," in *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, Peter Senge, Rick Ross, Bryan Smith, Charlotte Roberts, and Art Kleiner, Eds. (New York: Currency/Doubleday, 1994), 59-64.

[19] Senge et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*.

[20] Siegfried Ramler, "Global Education for the 21st Century," in *Kaleidosope: Readings in Education*, Kevin Ryan and James Michael Cooper, Eds. (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1992): 434-438.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Gruenewald, "Foundations of Place."

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Bobby Ann Starnes, Angela Carone, and Cynthia Paris, *From Thinking to Doing* (Mountain City, Georgia: The Foxfire Fund, 2002).

[26] Joseph A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1996).

[27] *Ethnograph*. Qualis Research Associates, http://www.qualisresearch.com.

[28] Grunewald, "Foundations of Place."

[29] Sharan B. Merriam's, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education: Revised and Expanded from Case Study Research in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

[30] Ibid.

[31] Nigel G. Fielding and Jane L. Fielding, *Linking Data* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1986).

[32] *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. (2002).

[33] Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known* (San Francisco, California: Harper & Row, 1993), 72.

[34] Ibid., 74.

[35] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1938).

[36] Theodore R. Sizer and Nancy. F. Sizer, "Grappling," in *Contemporary Issues in Curriculum* 3d ed., Allan C. Orstein, Linda S. Behar-Horenstein, and Edward F. Pajak, Eds. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), 143.

[37] Palmer, 66.

[38] Dewey, 16.

[39] Palmer, 73.

[40] Gruenewald, 645.

[41] Maxine Greene, "Art and Imagination," in Orstein et al., 36-42.

[42] William Glasser, "A New Look at School Failure and School Success," in Orstein et al., 231-238.

[43] Glasser, 232.

[44] Ross, "An Opportunity for Cross-Cultural, Project-Based Learning."

[45] Gruenewald, 639.

[46] Haluza-DeLay, 5.

Portfolio Analysis: Documenting the Progress and Performance of Educational Administration Students

Teresa Northern Miller and Trudy Salsberry

The field of educational administration continues to evolve as practitioners and researchers face the challenges of preparing leaders for schools. Cries for reform in university preparation of school administrators have been documented in a recent University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) monograph, *Better Leaders for America's Schools: Perspectives on the "Manifesto."*[1] Lassley's concerns included the following:

- Academic mediocrity may now be the norm;
- An educational monopoly in teacher and administrative preparation programs creates a barrier which keeps qualified persons from using skills needed to guide schools;
- The accountability movement has documented the weaknesses of American schools;
- Well-grounded professional preparation standards have not existed in the past.

In addition, research as to the validity of administrator preparation programs is lacking. Murphy and Vriesenga[2] reviewed existing research on administrative preparation programs as part of a UCEA project and found:

- The quantity of research on educational administration is quite limited;
- Few faculty are engaged in research regarding educational administration—existing research typically comes from dissertations;
- Research that exists is unfocused and largely survey or quantitative research;
- Existing research has not had much impact on practice.

The study reported here is intended to address both the concerns regarding the lack of successful administrator preparation programs and the need for additional research which can be used to evaluate administrator preparation programs.

Teresa Northern Miller is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University. Trudy Salsberry is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University.

Traditional training programs housed in institutions of higher education generally offer a series of courses designed and delivered by the professors of such institutions. A series of courses usually results in a degree and/or some form of licensure or certification for several levels of school administration. Rarely are practitioners consulted or included in the training process other than some form of loosely structured internships. Hoyle captured dissatisfaction with the very field of educational administration and thus with formal preparation programs.[3] He noted problems with a modernist physical science approach to the research in the field and a knowledge base in disarray. In addition, he argued that the demands for convenience in licensure and degree acquisition would continue to grow. As the accountability of *No Child Left Behind* requirements increase, demands for major changes in administrator preparation programs have been made in other studies, indicating a need for strengthening school-university partnerships while documenting a link between improved student achievement and strong school leaders.[4] In order to effectively change leadership preparation programs and better meet the new requirements for improved student achievement, reforms need to be made and evaluated.

A university located in the American Midwest has responded to these challenges by developing a series of partnerships with public schools to provide a Master's degree in Educational Leadership as an alternative to the traditional training delivery model still available. Through the development of unique academies, university instructors and school leaders co-plan and co-instruct cohorts of teachers within districts through two to three year programs of field-based administrative preparation. The students in the preparation programs of both delivery formats are assessed through a student-created portfolio, which documents progress and performance on the six standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC).[5] These are as follows:

I. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;

II. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;

III. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;

IV. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;

V. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

VI. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

The results of a pilot study, consisting of a document analysis of student-created portfolios from both the traditional and academy programs, are presented in this article. In the near future, a larger case study will be conducted to provide a more complete review of all of the significant elements needed to effectively evaluate the preparation program.

Context for the Study

Both traditional and academy program formats have been provided at this university for several years. Increasingly, university faculty are contacted by school leaders to develop more collaborative "field-based, on-site" administrative and teacher leadership programs. In addition, the state recently adopted the ISLLC standards as part of administrative licensure requirements. Accordingly, university faculty and public school personnel have worked collaboratively to align both delivery formats with the ISLLC and state licensure standards. A performance assessment portfolio was identified as the evidence required for completion of the master's degree. Prior to this study, no systematic, summative, and comprehensive analysis had been made. Therefore, an analytic process, based on documentation found in the portfolio, was developed to determine student growth and quality of the training and to provide a lens for program evaluation. The analysis of the portfolio is the first step in a larger study which will include a range of data sources, e.g., graduate interviews, surveys, completion rates, and job placement.

Research Methods

This study used student-created exit portfolios as the database for a qualitative document analysis of two forms of degree program delivery. The two forms of delivery included a traditional format consisting of a series of 30-39 credit hours of formal coursework delivered on campus by university faculty with licensure as an additional option, and a school-university collaborative format with the equivalent of 30-39 credit hours of coursework delivered on-site in school districts working in partnership with the university to deliver a Master's degree with certification as an additional option. In each delivery format, students in the Master's program were required to submit a portfolio documenting their acquisition of knowledge, growth in their performances, and changes or affirmation of the dispositions deemed necessary for school leaders, as defined by the early guiding document prepared by ISLLC. These standards have since been revised and adopted by numerous state education departments for training and licensing.

The student portfolios contained the following items:[6]

- *A resume and program of study*;
- *A self-assessment matrix* for each of the standards completed at the beginning, middle, and end of coursework, with four ratings for student development of knowledge, dispositions and performances– Little Understanding, Basic, Proficient, and Distinguished;
- *An executive summary* of student perceptions of achievement from the beginning of their coursework to the end of their program—a Master's degree and/or licensure;
- *Brief descriptions of artifacts* that documented their performances on each standard.
- *Detailed descriptions and inclusion of showcased (strongest) artifacts* for each standard with the rationale for selection;
- *Narratives relating student Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances* related to each standard which provided evidence to support the ratings in the self-assessment matrix.

Executive summaries, self assessments, artifacts and descriptions, and narratives were used in this pilot study to assess: (a) the student's perceived range of growth on each of the six standards; (b) recurrent themes in the executive summaries; (c) the quality and relatedness of student artifacts to each of the six standards; (d) the quality of student experiences related to each of the six standards; and (e) the student's ability to show connections between the professional literature and practice.

Criterion-based selection was used to determine the participants in this pilot study.[7] The criteria were as follows:

- The student must have been enrolled in a Master's program in the university's Department of Educational Leadership;
- The student must have graduated with the Master's degree during the academic year of 2003-2004;
- The student must have volunteered for participation.[8]

Ten students, five from each of the two program delivery formats were purposively selected for analysis based on these criteria. Although gender, age, and size of school were identified, the findings were disaggregated only by delivery format because of the small sample size and the process of selection. The ten selected comprised approximately 30% of all those graduating during the specified academic year. All students provided written consent forms and responded to a short demographic questionnaire to establish and confirm common characteristics. The characteristics for these students are listed in Table 1. Students from the traditional format group included two females and three males while students from the academy format group included five females and no males.

A qualitative approach for analysis was used, where the researchers began by jotting ideas in the margins of the documents, then moved to memorandum-writing, trying out themes, and exploring analogies/concepts, resulting in the development of tables and coding categories.[9] These coding categories were used to reduce information into meaningful units for explanation of the results. The data were disaggregated by delivery format, using the ISLLC standards as a framework for reporting. Each data set was examined using a different process which will be discussed in the remainder of this section.

Self–assessment matrix. The self-assessment matrices were analyzed by standard and by the subcategories of knowledge, dispositions, and performances. The matrix and performance levels were introduced to students at the beginning of their program, with the expectation that three sets of ratings would be completed during the degree program—at the beginning, midpoint, and end. The performance ratings: Little Understanding (LU) as the lowest rating; Basic (B) understanding; Proficient (P) as proficient; and Distinguished (D) as the highest rating. Growth was noted with a number reflecting the increase in rankings and the letter of the highest rating. For example, a student who moved two categories, from Little Understanding to Proficient, would be marked 2P while a student who moved one category, from Basic to Proficient, would be marked with a 1P. A student who perceived no growth would be noted only with the letter of rating. Students were informed when they began the program that it would be rare for them to be at the Distinguished rating level, and that they should not view an initial rating of Little Understanding negatively. Department faculty agreed that there

Table 1
Characteristics of Master's Degree Students Submitting Portfolios

Student Code by Type of Program	*Gender M/F*	*Miles from Campus*	*Age Range (years)*	*Years to Complete M.S.*	*Years in Education*	*Earning M.S. and/or License*	*Enrollment and School Type* as of 9/20/03*
Traditional Program							
F1	F	125	41–50	3.0	24	Both	122 Jr/SrH
F2	F	2	20–25	3.0	6	M.S.	341 MS
M1	M	35	26–30	3.0	8	Both	1,295 SrH
M2	M	20	20–25	4.0	6	Both	413 HS
M3	M	95	26–30	3.0	10	Both	182 HS
Academy Program							
F3	F	20	31–40	2.5	15	Both	152 El
F4	F	60	41–50	2.0	7	Both	507 Jr/SrH
F5	F	15	26–30	1.5	15	M.S.	356 Jr/SrH
F6	F	5	31–40	2.5	7	M.S.	152 El
F7	F	15	41–50	2.5	7	Both	152 El

* School type: Jr/SrH = combined junior and senior high school; MS = middle school; HS = high school; El = elementary school.

was no expectation that students would complete the program at a specified level; rather, all students were expected to demonstrate growth from the beginning to the end of their administrative program.

Executive Summaries. Executive summaries were examined for common topics or comments to establish overarching themes and corresponding subthemes. Students reflected on their growth from the beginning to the end of their program. The questions guiding the content analysis for the executive summaries were:

- What specific activities or types of growth did students discuss?
- What types of experiences were most commonly reported by students?
- Have students' ideas about leadership changed? If so, how have they changed?
- What specific types of knowledge, dispositions, and performances were most discussed by students?

Showcased Artifacts. The artifacts were reviewed for quality and accurate portrayal of their relationship to the identified standards. Based on both quality and relationship to the standard, the artifact for each standard was rated as Strong (S), Acceptable (A), or Marginal (M). Strong artifacts included sufficient detail, fit the standard listed, and described a clear leadership role with strong contributions and collaboration. Acceptable artifacts were related to the standard, but described a minor leadership role, e.g., simple participation or a role defined by another. Marginal artifacts did not clearly describe the participant's role, did not fit the standard, and showed no evidence of contribution.

Narratives. The narratives were coded in two ways. First, they were rated as to their ability to demonstrate acquisition of knowledge, dispositions, and performances for each standard. Ratings were either High (H) or Low (L). Narratives receiving a rating of High contained several detailed examples while narratives rated Low contained minimal examples and no details. Narratives were also rated as to the number of connections they made to credible literature. Ratings ranged from 0 to 3. If a narrative mentioned several prominent authors, it was rated 3, while a narrative that mentioned authors who were not as prominent was rated 2. A rating of 1 was given to those narratives that mentioned few prominent authors; and narratives that mentioned no authors received a rating of zero.

Findings

In this section, the findings from the initial review of ten student portfolios are presented. The portfolios revealed some differences across the two delivery formats with indicators of the differences between delivery formats in this study primarily related to the descriptions and types of artifacts selected as evidence of professional growth.

Self-Assessment Matrix. Students in both delivery formats perceived growth. The traditional format matrices reflected more variety of ratings than did those for the academy format. (See Tables 2.1 and 2.2.)[10] Ratings for students in the traditional program ranged from Little Understanding to Distinguished, as follows:

Standard I: Basic/5; Proficient/8; Distinguished/2.
Standard II: Basic/5; Proficient/9; Distinguished/1.
Standard III: Little Understanding/1; Basic/5; Proficient/9.
Standard IV: Little Understanding/1; Basic/5; Proficient/9.
Standard V: Little Understanding/2; Basic/3; Proficient/8; Distinguished/2.
Standard VI: Little Understanding/1; Basic/6; Proficient/6; Distinguished/2.

Table 2.1
Self-Assessment Matrix: Perceptions of Growth and Final Level of Attainment By Knowledge, Dispositions, Performances for ISLLC Standards In a Traditional Program

Student Codes	*Category**	*Standard I*	*Standard II*	*Standard III*	*Standard IV*	*Standard V*	*Standard VI*
F1	Knowledge	B	B	B	B	B	B
	Dispositions	P	P	B	B	P	B
	Performances	B	P	B	P	B	B
F2	Knowledge	1P	1P	2P	1P	1P	2P
	Dispositions	3D	1D	1P	2P	1P	2D
	Performances	3D	2P	2P	2P	2P	2P
M1	Knowledge	1P	2P	1P	1P	1P	2P
	Dispositions	1P	1P	1P	1P	1P	2P
	Performances	2P	1B	1P	1P	1P	1B
M2	Knowledge	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B	1B
	Dispositions	1B	1B	1B	1B	LU	1B
	Performances	1B	1B	LU	LU	LU	LU
M3	Knowledge	1P	2P	2P	2P	2D	1P
	Dispositions	1P	2P	1P	1P	1D	1P
	Performances	2P	2P	1P	1P	1P	2D

* Ratings were: LU = Little Understanding; B = Basic Understanding; P = Proficient; D = Distinguished. Growth was noted by a number reflecting the increase in rankings and the letter of the highest rating. For example, a student who moved two categories, from Little Understanding to Proficient, would be marked 2P. A student who moved one category, from Basic to Proficient would be marked with a 1P. A student who perceived no growth would be noted with the letter of rating, such as LU for Little Understanding.

Academy program students rated themselves either Basic or Proficient, with a majority of the ratings at the same level, as follows:

Standard I: Basic/4; Proficient/11;
Standard II: Basic/5; Proficient/10;
Standard III: Basic/11; Proficient/4
Standard IV: Basic/2; Proficient/13;
Standard V: Basic/6; Proficient/9;
Standard VI: Basic/10; Proficient/5.

The consistency in academy student responses might reflect the cohesiveness developed through the two-year cohort group.

Numerical ratings, ranging 1 to 3, were also used to indicate the amount of growth. For example, students who moved ahead one category received a rating of 1, and so forth. By totaling these across the rows for knowledge, dispositions, and performances, one finds slightly higher perceptions of growth by academy students. Using the totals to determine the amount of growth per standard, the least amount of growth for traditional students was found on Standards III, IV, and V. For academy students, the least amount of growth was found on Standards I, II, and V. There were only minor differences in student ratings on the subcategories of knowledge, dispositions and performances. Both groups perceived growth in all three subcategories.

Executive Summaries. The researchers reviewed each student's executive summary for comments that indicated growth from the beginning of the program to the end. Categories were developed, and responses were coded for students' overall perceptions of growth, perceptions about leadership, and perceptions of growth in applying leadership skills. Based on an intensive coding process, the following student comments were representative of the responses in each of these categories:

> I realized the incredible upward spiral of growth that was needed and expected on my part. (F1)
>
> I have been able to grow and develop in my understanding of the roles involved within the school system. (F4)
>
> The coursework...allowed me the chance to expand my knowledge about how schools are organized. (M1)

Changes in student perceptions as to their understanding of leadership were also found in comments:

> My perception of leadership in organizations prior to this coursework was based on a top down, authoritarian model. (F6)
>
> I felt the leadership myth, that leaders who sometimes keep secrets or withhold information due to a sense of power, was a reality. (F7)

Table 2.2
Self-Assessment Matrix: Perceptions of Growth and Final Level of Attainment By Knowledge, Dispositions, Performances for ISLLC Standards In an Academy Program

Student Codes	*Category**	*Standard I*	*Standard II*	*Standard III*	*Standard IV*	*Standard V*	*Standard VI*
F3	Knowledge	1B	B	1B	B	B	1B
	Dispositions	P	1P	2P	1P	B	B
	Performances	1P	1B	1B	B	1B	1B
F4	Knowledge	2P	1P	1B	1P	1P	2P
	Dispositions	2P	1P	1B	1P	1P	1P
	Performances	2P	1P	1B	1P	1P	1B
F5	Knowledge	1B	1B	1B	2P	1B	1B
	Dispositions	1B	1B	1B	2P	1B	1B
	Performances	1B	1B	1B	2P	1B	1B
F6	Knowledge	1P	1P	1P	1P	1P	1B
	Dispositions	1P	P	P	P	P	1B
	Performances	1P	1P	1P	1P	1P	1B
F7	Knowledge	2P	1P	1B	2P	1P	2P
	Dispositions	2P	1P	1B	2P	P	2P
	Performances	2P	1P	1B	2P	P	2P

* Ratings were: LU = Little Understanding; B = Basic Understanding; P = Proficient; D = Distinguished. Growth was noted by a number reflecting the increase in rankings and the letter of the highest rating. For example, a student who moved two categories, from Little Understanding to Proficient, would be marked 2P. A student who moved one category, from Basic to Proficient would be marked with a 1P. A student who perceived no growth would be noted with the letter of rating, such as LU for Little Understanding.

Several students indicated gains in leadership skills which could be used in their current positions. Representative comments included:

> I will more consciously endeavor to stay up with current research through reading, listservs and other means. (M2)
>
> I began reading other books related to my teaching position. (F3)
>
> I've definitely learned to seek out and recommend other professional development opportunities rather than wait for the school district to offer us the knowledge we need. (F6)

All students in both groups perceived some personal growth and gains in knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Also, there were common topics or areas of growth statements. For example, students' personal growth statements often mentioned a change in vision and an awareness of a wider context than their own classrooms, often extending into their respective communities. The views of leadership moved from an authoritarian style of leadership to a more inclusive, collaborative style of leadership. The skills gained were mentioned most often: collaboration; identification of personal strengths and weaknesses; information literacy; and use of technology. Other skills mentioned less frequently were: lifelong learning; staying current with research; communication; and identification of tasks for leadership development.

Artifacts and descriptions. The student portfolios included six showcased artifacts which were analyzed as to quality and depth of leadership roles in which the students engaged. Twenty-one of the 30 showcased artifacts reviewed from the traditional students contained strong evidence of leadership roles while 23 of the 30 artifacts reviewed from the academy students demonstrated strong evidence. (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2.) When comparisons were made by standard, the traditional students' artifacts were strongest for Standards I, IV, V; and for academy students, artifacts were strongest for Standards I, II, IV, VI. Further, for academy students, the most consistent rating (Strong) was for Standard IV(Collaboration). Combining ratings for both formats, artifacts for Standards I and IV were the strongest.

Narrative Descriptions. The narrative descriptions were rated in two ways: (a) Did the narrative description demonstrate that the student had acquired knowledge, dispositions, and performances for each standard; and (b) Did the narrative description provide connections to credible literature? In response to the first question, ratings were either High (H) or Low (L). The first rating was related to the number of examples given to demonstrate knowledge, dispositions, and performances of each standard; narratives receiving a rating of High contained several detailed examples while narratives rated Low contained minimal examples and no details. The rating for the second question was determined by the number of connections the

Table 3.1
Ratings of Students' Showcased Artifacts by ISLLC Standard In a Traditional Program*

Student Codes	*Standard I*	*Standard II*	*Standard III*	*Standard IV*	*Standard V*	*Standard VI*
F1	A	A	A	A	A	A
F2	S	S	S	S	S	A
M1	S	S	S	S	S	S
M2	S	S	S	S	S	S
M3	S	A	A	S	S	S

Table 3.2
Ratings of Students' Showcased Artifacts by ISLLC Standard In an Academy Program*

Student Codes	*Standard I*	*Standard II*	*Standard III*	*Standard IV*	*Standard V*	*Standard VI*
F3	S	S	S	S	S	S
F4	S	S	S	S	S	S
F5	A	A	A	S	A	M
F6	S	S	S	S	A	S
F7	S	S	A	S	S	S

* Ratings were defined as follows: S = Strong, where the artifact contained sufficient detail, fit the category, and the student demonstrated a clear leadership role, strong contributions and collaboration; A = Acceptable, where the artifact fit the category, but the student did not play a dominant role, was involved in a minor role, or was told or given directions; M = Marginal, where the artifact did not clearly fit the category. The student attended, but his/her role was unclear. Here there was no evidence of contribution. The artifact might be classified as busy work or a clerical task, and not distinctly different from work performed in a teacher role.

narrative made to credible literature. Ratings ranged from 0 to 3. If a narrative mentioned several prominent authors, it was rated 3, while a narrative that mentioned authors who were not as prominent was rated 2. A rating of 1 was given to those narratives that mentioned few prominent authors; and narratives that mentioned no authors received a rating of zero.

The overall ratings for narratives across the two programs were relatively equal although there were some differences as to the number of connections made to credible literature. In particular, traditional students cited a higher number of references than academy students. However, the narratives documented students' abilities related to each standard equally well across program delivery formats. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 list the results of this analysis.

Summary

This analysis of portfolios as a performance assessment measure of student proficiencies related to the ISLLC standards for school leaders indicated that both traditional and academy formats were effective in preparing students to apply those standards to school situations. Students in both delivery models perceived growth and were able to demonstrate their skills and performances by creating strong artifacts and completing executive summaries and narratives describing their growth in relationship to each standard. Both programs appear to have yielded a clearer understanding of the guiding framework (ISLLC Standards) and high levels of confidence in leadership abilities. There were, however, differences between the two delivery models. Traditional students perceived a broader range of growth than did those in the academy format. Academy students indicated more consistency in their ratings on the self-assessment than did traditional students. The executive summaries of both groups reflected similar growth comments and patterns. For showcased artifacts, academy students had slightly stronger ratings than did traditional students. Academy students' artifacts were stronger for Standards I, II, IV, VI while traditional students' artifacts were stronger for Standards I, IV and V. The narratives were relatively equal across both formats, with traditional students earning higher ratings on references to prominent authors.

Implications

Based on the analysis of portfolios for this pilot study, the following recommendations warrant consideration for both and current practice and further study:

- Traditional and school-university partnership administrator preparation programs should be continued as valid delivery and performance assessment models for leadership preparation programs;
- Both types of programs should work to increase student understanding of the self-assessment matrix ratings to broaden student abilities to assess their own growth;

Table 4.1
Ratings of the Narrative Descriptions of the Six ISLLC Standards by Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances in a Traditional Program*

Student Codes	*I (a)*	*I (b)*	*II (a)*	*II (b)*	*III (a)*	*III (b)*	*IV (a)*	*IV (b)*	*V (a)*	*V (b)*	*VI (a)*	*VI (b)*
F1	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3
F2	H	1	H	1	H	1	H	1	H	1	H	1
M1	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3
M2	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3	H	3
M3	L	0	L	0	L	0	L	0	L	0	L	0

Table 4.2
Ratings of the Narrative Descriptions of the Six ISLLC Standards by Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances in an Academy Program*

Student Codes	*I (a)*	*I (b)*	*II (a)*	*II (b)*	*III (a)*	*III (b)*	*IV (a)*	*IV (b)*	*V (a)*	*V (b)*	*VI (a)*	*VI (b)*
F3	H	2	H	2	H	2	H	2	H	2	H	2
F4	H	2	H	3	H	3	H	2	H	2	H	2
F5	H	1	H	2	H	1	H	1	H	1	L	1
F6	H	1	H	1	H	1	H	1	H	1	H	1
F7	H	3	H	2	H	1	H	2	H	2	H	2

* The narratives were coded in two ways: (a) the narratives were rated as to the student's ability to demomstrate acquisition of Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances in each standard. Ratings were: H = High for narratives with several detailed examples; and L = Low for narratives with minimal examples and no details; (b) The narratives were also rated as to the number of connections to credible literature. A rating of 3 was given for mentioning several prominent authors; 2 for mentioning some authors, not as prominent; 1 for mentioning few prominent authors mentioned; and 0 for no authors mentioned.

- Both types of programs should continue to analyze student reflections (executive summaries) for changes in growth statements, perceived applications of growth in using newly developed leadership skills, perceptions regarding growth in the knowledge, dispositions, and performances related to the ISLLC standards;
- Administrative preparation programs should continue to develop connections among students over the length of their administrative coursework, as well as strong connections to school districts in order to provide quality field-based leadership opportunities for students;
- Administrative preparation programs should continue to increase student knowledge, dispositions and performances related to the ISLLC standards and continue to expose students to a broad range of credible, current leadership literature;
- Portfolio assessment and subsequent analyses should be used to provide rich information to universities and students regarding the success of the preparation programs and documentation of student competencies.

This pilot study reported the results of an analysis of exit portfolios, using primarily qualitative data, from one year of graduates enrolled in two types of delivery systems. The researchers will be gathering additional information through student interviews and analysis of portfolios over a longer period of time. Both researchers are convinced that this type of performance assessment is a powerful tool for the assessment of student competencies. In addition, this type of analysis can provide vital information regarding the validity and strength of administrative preparation programs.

Endnotes

[1] Thomas J. Lasley, II. *Better Leaders for America's Schools: Perspectives on the "Manifesto"* (Columbia, Missouri: University Council for Educational Administration, 2004), 4-9.

[2] Joe Murphy and Michael Vriesenga. *Research on Preparation Programs in Educational Administration: An Analysis*, (Columbia, Missouri: University Council for Educational Administration, 2004), 9-12.

[3] John Hoyle, "Educational Administration: Atlantis or Phoenix?" *UCEA Review* 45 (Winter, 2003): 11-14.

[4] Tim Waters and Sally Grubb, *The Leadership We Need: Using Research to Strengthen the Use of Standards for Administrator Preparation and Licensure Programs* (Aurora, Colorado: McREL, 2004); Gene Bottoms, Kathy O'Neill, Betty Fry and David Hill, *Good Principals are the Key to Successful Schools: Six Strategies to Prepare more Good Principals* (Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board, 2003); Bradley Portin, Paul Schneider, Michael DeArmond and Lauren Gundlach, *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship* (Seattle, Washington: Center on Reinventing Public Education, 2003); Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson, and Kyla Wahlstrom, *How Leadership Influences Student Learning* (New York: Wallace Foundation, 2004).

[5] Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, *Standards for School Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

[6] Items used in the pilot study are in italics.

[7] Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preissle. *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research* 2d ed. (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 1993), 69-78.

[8] No one was required to participate in the study, but all Master's degree students prepared a portfolio.

[9] Robert C. Bogdan and Sara K. Biklen, *An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, 3d ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), 161-172.

[10] Student F1 completed only one rating using the self-assessment matrix; so no numbers are used to indicate growth. Others without numbers indicate no change in the rating from beginning to end of the program.

Commentary

Online Learning in Secondary Education: A New Frontier

Simone Conceição and Sarah B. Drummond

Introduction

Distance education is not a new concept in the educational arena. In 1892, it was established in the United States with correspondence study at the University of Chicago through the home study department of the Division of Extension.[1,2] As such, distance education was first aimed at nontraditional adult learners who did not have access to higher education.[3] Later, between the end of World War I and the start of World War II, the U.S. government provided radio broadcast licenses to 202 schools, and in the 1950s educational television broadcasts were introduced in schools.[4] More recently, online learning, made possible by the World Wide Web and virtual realities, has entered the realm of distance education as a result of the development of high performance computing and communications.[5] With these new technologies, learning has become available any time, anywhere.

Online learning, also referred to as distance education in this article, involves a variety of approaches, such as making resources available electronically and creating rich, interactive online experiences with class activities using Web tools like chat and discussion groups. Online courses offer flexibility as they may not require learners to be at a specific location for class participation. Students may work with course materials at their own convenience, or they may work collaboratively with other students in a Web environment. Today distance education serves not only adult learners, but also secondary education students.[6] Educational organizations serving high schools are rapidly distributing online education via the Internet due to the competitive market. However, rapid changes in the field may not necessarily mean higher quality programs. To insure high quality online offerings, institutions of secondary education need to have in place organizational strategies to plan and implement distance education.[7] This article is designed to assist secondary schools/districts to make informed, research-based decisions in that process. We begin with a review of related literature on the status of online learning in high schools. Next we describe the study's methodology and present the results. The article closes with conclusions and recommendations for those considering the plunge into online education at the secondary level.

Simone Conceição is Assistant Professor of Adult Education in the Department of Administrative Leadership at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sarah B. Drummond is Director of Field Education and Assistant Professor of Ministerial Leadership at Andover Newton Theological School.

Review of Related Literature

Little research-based literature is available on the current status of online learning in high schools. The paucity of information about what high schools are doing to provide online learning to their students is perhaps not surprising considering the relative novelty of the phenomenon. However, Websites exist that give detailed examples of the ways in which high schools are making online learning possible.[8] Many who have administered the beginning phases of online learning programs have written articles offering guidance to others, but, in general, not a great deal of information exists regarding the overall status of online learning in secondary education.

One exception is Clark's 2001 study that reviewed online learning programs in 33 high schools for the purpose of "provid[ing] insights into activities and trends of K-12 virtual schools in the United States."[9] This study included survey results, virtual school profiles, and a review of contextual issues. This study does have some limitations because in a rapidly expanding field a study even a few years old may be out-of-date. Since its publication, literally hundreds of online programs have emerged. Furthermore, the survey polled online program administrators but did not triangulate data by first-hand analysis of online high school Websites.

Although little research has taken place related to the overall status of online learning in high schools, there has been a great deal of activity that merits attention. Just a cursory glance at the news media from Wisconsin, for example, reveals both curiosity about online learning and anxiety about the policy issues it presents. In 2003, three news stories in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* offered a window into the current debate over online learning. One described two new online high schools that were competing with one another for students[10] while another described a district's debate over whether to create a virtual charter school.[11] A third described angry protests over students being allowed through the state's open enrollment law to attend online high schools at the expense of taxpayers.[12]

Online learning for high school students is both making headlines and addressing previously unmet needs. Rural Missouri schools that have had trouble attracting mathematics and science teachers have begun to offer mathematics courses online through a partnership with Southwest Missouri State University.[13] Administrators from Florida Virtual High School, one of the largest and oldest programs providing online learning, have written about their experiences and lessons learned from creating that state-wide entity.[14] In perhaps the most comprehensive report on the advent of a program providing online learning, Zucker and Kozma wrote a full-length book on the process behind beginning Virtual High School, an online learning consortium in New York.[15] More specifically, Vrasidas and Chamberlain, who oversaw the creation of an online course for students, detailed the steps that were necessary for implementing the course.[16] Steps included assembling a team comprised of teachers, instructional designers, a graphic artist, a Web developer, and a database programmer. Designing the program required leaders to communicate with major stakeholders (the superintendent, for example), select students, develop content, and train teachers. They concluded with the assertion that working with an outside vendor would likely have been more time-efficient than designing an in-house program.

Because of the number of steps and stakeholders involved in offering any new form of instruction, online learning included, authors, such as Lawton and Bonhomme and Moore and Kearsley, have stressed the importance of a systems approach to online

learning program development.[17,18] Still, practically speaking, the systems approach suggests only a mode of leadership, not nuts-and-bolts information related to how an online program comes to be. Some guidance is available for addressing the more technical and practical aspects of online programs. In a 2001 special issue of *The School Administrator* devoted to online learning, Hirsh addressed the question, "How do we choose a vendor?"[19] while Reents explored the advantages of creating "homegrown" programs rather than partnering with a vendor.[20] Guidance for creation of online learning in high schools can also be found at the state level in Kalman's "Principles for Creating a Statewide Online Learning Organization: The Process and Decisions Underlying the Creation of Colorado Online Learning."[21] Here the state of Colorado outlined its hopes for the future of online learning in the state, asserting that it would support schools that wished to branch out into this area, but did not create a statewide school. In Wisconsin, Sanders, writing for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, published a similar report titled, "Virtual Education: New Opportunities, New Challenges," outlining the qualities a school should seek out when determining if an online program was suitable for its students.[22] Guidance and guidelines are available in some areas of the country around certain questions related to online education for high school students. A comprehensive picture, however, is difficult to find. Those who provide advice generally do so from a shallow basis of experience, and guidelines do not provide schools with assistance for discovering options, only assessing them.

Another theme in the current literature about online learning relates to policy issues, some of which are divisive and controversial. These fall into two broad categories: (1) fiscal barriers to participation in online learning; and (2) general resistance to online education as a form of instruction.

Some online learning programs were created specifically to address equity issues in education. For example, some states provide access to Advanced Placement courses to students who live in rural or economically disadvantaged via online programs.[23,24] However, according to Weisman and Birtolo, in spite of policymakers' good intentions, online programs for financially disadvantaged school districts can be problematic because they may not have the technology necessary for students to access them.[25] Overall, without public or private assistance, school districts face major new expenditures to provide online learning opportunities.[26,27] For example, Reents estimated the annual cost of a "home-grown" or district-developed program at $300,000 annually[28] while Clark estimated the annual estimated cost per pupil of working with a vendor to be $300.[29]

The third fiscal issue raised by online learning— open enrollment laws—leads into the topic of resistance to online learning as a concept. In some parts of the United States, when a student leaves a brick-and-mortar school to enroll in an online high school in another school district, taxpayer money follows, creating a loss of revenue for the student's school district of residence.[30,31] If the cyberschool receives the same or similar amount of funding as a school district which must support a physical plant with the same amount of funding, questions arise as to the fairness of the funding formula. In addition, equivalent funding, in the eyes of the public, makes a symbolic statement that the state considers online learning and face-to-face instruction equally effective. This is a pedagogical concern for some taxpayers and a source of anxiety for school districts who must maintain brick-and-mortar schools no matter how many students depart for online settings.[32] In Florida, Weisman and Birtolo found that program designers for the state-sponsored online learning program were caught off-guard by the level of acrimony toward online learning.[33] Reeves pointed out that it was not only the general public who questioned the merit of online learning.[34] Superintendents perceived online schools not only as a drain on funding for public education but also a mode of instruction that benefited private vendors while hurting students. Furthermore, every one of the charter school proponents she interviewed considered online high schools to be a step in the wrong direction for the charter movement in particular, and for education in general.[35] Interestingly, Clark found in a survey that even fewer individuals approved of online education than home schooling. While 41% of the general public expressed approval for home schooling, the approval rate for online education was only 30%.[36]

If a substantial percentage of the public disapproves of online high schools, and superintendents suspect them, what about teachers? Perhaps this quotation from a news story about teachers protesting the creation of a virtual charter school in Wisconsin sums up their concerns:

> "We have very, very serious concerns and questions about this approach to education. It's attacking the very core of what we do," said [a] high school teacher [and] chief negotiator for the Fredonia Education Association. "As a professional, I just don't like the idea that a CD-ROM would replace me."[37]

As a remedy for teacher resistance, Lawton and Bonhomme wrote that teachers must be included in the implementation of an online program, asserting that those who are not consulted often show not only resistance to such programs but low performance in supporting students involved in them.[38] However, no research was found to support the efficacy of this approach.

In sum, administrators, faculty, and parents alike have expressed a number of concerns about online learning for high school students. For example, Kalman found that they believe that programs are often geared toward brighter students who are then removed from learning environments where they can be of most benefit to other students.[39] In addition, Weisman and Birtolo concluded that these groups perceived that schools and independent online programs do not work together for the benefit of students, but rather function separately and without communication.[40] Overall, little information is available to high school administrators who wish to understand the options available to them as they consider whether online learning is right for their students. With only anecdotal evidence on ideas that have worked in some locations, school administrators may find themselves vulnerable to the sales pitches of persuasive vendors wishing to sell their products[41] or influenced by the objections of community members and teachers who may lack information about the positive aspects of online learning.

Research Methods

This study came about as a result of one high school deciding it wanted as much information as possible before deciding to venture into online learning. In the interest of making an informed decision about online learning, Shorewood High School, a suburban school located in northern Milwaukee County in Wisconsin, convened a committee of local stakeholders and experts in online education called the Shorewood High School Distance Learning Committee. It

was through participation in this committee that we were asked to find "what is out there" and to submit a research report to help the committee to make decisions.

Unlike the online high school with a motto taken from Victor Hugo, "You cannot stop an idea whose time has come,"[42] Shorewood High School resisted jumping on the online learning bandwagon by informing itself. High school leaders did not want to allow market forces or pedagogical fads to overtake their mission; rather they sought to integrate online learning into that mission. The resulting research was designed to assist the Shorewood High School Distance Learning Committee to move forward in a knowledgeable fashion, understanding what it needs to consider as it ponders next steps toward online learning.

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative methods included an online survey questionnaire distributed to email addresses of online learning providers, which was developed based upon the review of related literature. (See the Appendix for a copy of the survey instrument.) The development of the survey questionnaire rested in large part on the typology we developed as a result of the review of related literature. (See Table 1.) Qualitative methods included Website analysis and interviews with school administrators who lead distance learning initiatives and vendors. An Internet search of organizations that provide some type of distance learning opportunity to students in secondary education was conducted. Ninety-four Websites that provide some type of distance learning opportunity for secondary education were found. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured, open-ended questions via telephone (N=4) and email (N=8) with 12 administrators who volunteered through the survey to provide further information. The purpose of the interviews was to triangulate the data and further clarify survey responses.

Results of Study

The results of this study were limited by the three factors: (1) Website access; (2) survey response rate; and (3) the interview process. Many of the Websites were proprietary, requiring a password to view any content beyond the advertisement section. The survey response rate was admittedly low at 20.5%; that is, of the 112 surveys distributed, only 23 responses were received. Of the 112 email addresses, 80 were found through institutional Websites, and 32 were provided by a vendor of e-learning solutions. Many of the respondents worked with the vendor who provided a list of names and email addresses, further limiting the generalizability of the results.[43] However, respondents included a wide variety of professionals in online education: deans of curriculum and instruction; program leaders; program assistant directors; directors of curriculum development; principals; executive project directors; e-learning distance education specialists; and coordinators of digital content. Although the original research plan was to use telephone interviews, many of the respondents requested an email interview due to time constraints.

According to data collected, the online high school in existence the longest started its program in 1995. At the time of this study, school enrollments varied from 20 students to 3,116. Over 70% of respondents worked with a vendor, e.g., Class.com, JonesKnowledge, Blackboard, eCollege, Compass, APEX learning, SchoolFirst, University of Texas, ComputerPrep, Community College courses. Respondents were asked which of five types of online high schools they considered themselves. The types and percentages were as follows: (1) state sponsored (9.1%); (2) district-sponsored or district-chartered (36.4%); (3) university-based (9.1%); (4) vendor-based (13.6%); and (5) other (36.4%). Responses to the category of "other" included: non-profit collaboration with other states and foreign countries; private school/individualized instruction; consortium of education service centers; grant-initiated; and private.

Online learning program models in secondary education are determined by the type of partnership between the school and partners/vendors. Three types of partnerships between schools and vendors were found: (1) "home-grown" programs, where schools developed online courses with no vendor involvement; (2) hybrid programs, where schools created some online courses in-house and then chose

Table 1
Typology for Describing Online Learning in Secondary Education

Types of Online High Schools	*Program Models*	*Course Offerings*	*Students Program Aims to Serve*	*Student/Program Relationship*
State sponsored	"Home-grown" programs	AP courses	Recovering credit	Students register with Online High School directly, graduate with diploma from online program
District sponored	Hybrid programs	Languages	Home-schooling	
District charter	Vendor programs	Technology	Advanced courses	
University-based		Unusual electives	High school diploma	Students register with Online High School via school principal or guidance counselor
Vendor		Home-school curriculum	Early graduation	
		Comprehensive diploma program	Schedule conflicts	Hybrid model between the two
			Students with special circumstances	

vendor courses as needed; and (3) vendor programs, where schools, consortia, or districts contracted with a vendor and formed a partnership with that course provider. Within these three categories were found different rationales as to why schools chose to work with vendors or not. For example, some home-grown programs branched into online learning before vendors were creating content; so they had no choice but to create their own programs. Those with fully in-house programs stated that they enjoy the flexibility and freedom this provides them. Those with partnerships with vendors appreciated knowing that content has been prescreened for meeting state standards and had been created by professional online instructors. Respondents with vendor partnerships enjoyed the convenience of not having to "reinvent the wheel," saving staff time and resources. In situations where teachers had no experience teaching online, working with a vendor was perceived as less taxing than training teachers. In one particular case, a school received a grant in order to offer online courses and needed to act quickly. It did not have time to learn the necessary skills to create an online curriculum; so it contracted with a vendor.

Respondents were queried as to they types of online courses they offered. These included: basic graduation requirements, such as English and Algebra; unusual electives, like Native American History); test preparation, such as SAT and ACT examination practice; Advanced Placement (AP) courses and AP examination preparation; languages; and technology courses. Fifty percent of survey respondents responded that the most popular courses offered through online high schools were AP, languages, and technology. In a few cases, a comprehensive diploma program was offered. Respondents commented that offering courses online made it possible for schools to offer unusual electives and a more widely varied curriculum. Some schools in rural areas reported offering courses online in order to add courses without having to hire new teachers.

Also, respondents were asked to select from the following reasons students took online courses: recovering credit; advanced courses; early graduation; home bound due to disability or long-term illness; work-related travel; home schooling; online high school diploma; and schedule conflicts. The aim of most high school online programs was to serve students who required alternative avenues of access to school, such as making up credit (90.9%); schedule conflicts (81.8%); early graduation (68.2%); advanced courses (63.6 percent%); home-schooling (59.1%); online high school diploma (40.9%); and students with special circumstances (40.9%). Special circumstances included:

- Courses not be offered by the school;
- Student withdrawals, expulsions, incarcerations;
- Student choice to accelerate/decelerate course pace;
- Students studying abroad for a semester;
- Student preference to work independently;
- Student transfer;
- District desire to expand curriculum

High schools that made online learning opportunities available to their students chose to do so in order to meet a variety of different goals. Only one program reported a long-standing tradition of distance education programs, where online learning had picked up where correspondence courses had left off. All other online high schools reported having begun to offer online learning relatively recently in order to expand course offerings and meet the needs of students. The majority of participants in this study administered programs through which students took only one or two of their courses online. In most programs, students used online courses to supplement face-to-face instruction at a school. Some of the participants in the study, however, managed fully online programs where students graduated from an online high school.

The relationship between the student and the online learning program was linked both to enrollment policies and procedures of schools and to the level of support students receive before they start online courses and during the delivery of the online course. In some cases, students enrolled directly in an online high school and even received diplomas from those schools. At the other end of the spectrum, some online courses were offered to students within the school building with onsite mentors helping and overseeing students. Between these two extremes, high schools found a variety of delivery approaches.

The type of support students received before and during their journey into online learning determined the type of relationship between the organization and the student. Only a few online schools had the capacity to prescreen students for preparedness before enrollment. One charter school administrator stated that she could not turn a student away due to state open enrollment laws. Another online administrator maintained that although he was allowed under law to prescreen students, he received pressure from high-level administrators to admit students who did not function well in a traditional classroom.

Implications of Results

Online programs in secondary education are still emerging. Educational organizations that have included online learning in their strategic planning may learn from others who have used it. Our study raised several questions for administrators to consider relating to the practices that current online programs in secondary education have in place:

- What standards is your organization employing for curriculum/course design?
- Does your organization have guidelines for program/course completion?
- What is the average cost for a student to participate in an online program?
- What strategies does your organization use to assess student learning and evaluate program effectiveness?

Standards for Curriculum/Course Design

Standards for curriculum/course design may be applied from different perspectives. One is from the perspective of designing the curriculum (content) to meet state and national standards. The other perspective is related to course design. Both home-grown and vendor-provided courses must meet state and national standards. Due to the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation and the differences in state standards, curriculum alignment is a concern for online high school administrators. One vendor interviewed in this study recently found a computer program that automatically screens curricula for state standards. The time-consuming task of aligning curriculum with state and national standards served as sufficient justification for some schools to choose to work with a vendor. From a course design perspective, schools reported that online courses were updated frequently either by vendors or by in-house instructors, depending on

the course's origin. Some reported updates as frequent as once per week while others stated that each course was carefully reviewed before each new semester.

Guidelines for Program/Course Completion

Online programs often cited as a benefit the fact that students can work at their own pace through online high school programs. The online programs investigated in this study, however, largely had distinct time periods during which students had to complete courses. Some online high schools required that students take courses in school computer labs under the supervision of teachers. All of the programs had at the very least guidelines with regard to the amount of student time needed to complete online courses.

Programs reported course completion rates ranged from 72% to 100%. The criteria programs used to determine whether a student had completed a course varied as well. In some cases, students were said to have completed a course if they fulfilled all course requirements. In other cases, students were required to complete a certain percentage of lessons or course assignments in order to be assigned a grade. Many online programs have a two to three-week trial period at the beginning of the term to gives student the chance to learn what online courses are like and decide whether online learning is for them. The trial period gives students time to drop courses without penalty if they found that online learning was not for them. Some respondents commented that students were often surprised at how much work was involved with online courses, having expected the online environment to be less challenging than face-to-face instruction. Existing online programs tended to give students guidelines for how much time they should spend working on courses, such as a common suggestion of one hour per course per day. One program where nearly all students completed their entire degree online required two hours of in-person, mentored instruction every day. Many programs required that students complete courses within the time frame of one semester, or around 18 weeks. The programs with strict time limits tended to offer accommodations to students with special circumstances such as illness or special learning needs.

Average Cost per Students

The average cost of a one-semester online course at the time of this study was approximately $300 per student, not including expenses such as textbooks, supplies, and administrative fees. The way in which this cost was covered varied from program to program. At one end of the continuum, students' families covered the full cost of online courses. In contrast, some school districts covered all costs. Under a third alternative, schools joined consortia or contracted with vendors so that as more students signed up for courses, the per-student cost went down. However, some vendors charged a fee per student per course, and/or they charged schools for the cost of on-site mentors they deemed crucial to the success of their product. For example, one online vendor charged a flat fee of $300 per student in a course while another charged $195 per seat in its semester-long courses and required high schools to hire onsite mentors at $25 per hour for four hours per week.

Strategies to Assess Student Learning and Evaluate Program Effectiveness

Online programs utilized student assessment tools that are not dissimilar to those administered face-to-face. One vendor used self-assessment quizzes, journals, and unit tests for students in the online environment, with a mentor or teacher proctoring all of the exams. One online program relied much more heavily on portfolios, activities, and participation in online chats with classmates than testing. All program administrators surveyed engaged in practices designed to assure academic honesty.

Online high schools measured school effectiveness and student satisfaction in a variety of ways. Many surveyed students at the end of courses and solicited feedback from on-site mentors. Others offered functions on their Websites through which students could send comments. For the most part, schools with vendor contracts allowed the vendor to manage feedback and comments. Vendors surveyed also explicitly sought input from online teachers regarding program quality.

Interview participants, when asked how students do when transitioning out of online courses and back into a regular classroom, found this question difficult to answer. Most programs the study included are relatively new and have not yet been able to measure student success over a period of time. Some online high schools do not offer sequenced courses (such as Algebra I or Algebra II) online, but rather offer only electives, in which case transition back into the classroom is difficult to measure.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Understanding how online high schools function can be beneficial to high school administrators, district personnel, and state departments of education. A wide array of options is available to schools interested in providing online learning opportunities to students; however, selecting the appropriate action requires a certain level of familiarity and comfort with the different programs currently in use. This study can have practical applicability for those interested in understanding the options they face in choosing among providers and program design components.

Online courses provide alternatives to schools and to students that were, up until very recently, not available. Still, creating an online program for a high school is a massive undertaking not to be entered into lightly. Distance education has pedagogical, political, and logistical implications that must be taken into consideration in view of the school as a complete system. Therefore, we recommend the following steps for a school considering making online learning opportunities available to its students:

1. *Assess goals.* Why does the school wish to try to offer online courses to students? What need would be met by an online program that cannot be met otherwise?
2. *Consider resources.* What does the school possess by way of resources (e.g., funding, teachers interested in teaching online, technology infrastructure), and to what outside support could it gain access (e.g., grants, vendors)?
3. *Seek out partners, collaborators, financial supporters.* In this time of rapid proliferation of online programs, many high schools are considering branching out in this area. Joint efforts may offer cost-savings and work-sharing.
4. *Experiment.* Create a pilot program involving vendor courses, or home-grown courses, or a few of each. Build into the pilot program an ongoing evaluation mechanism in order to make the pilot project a true learning experience.

In closing, as online learning in secondary education continues to expand as an option for offering educational opportunities to

students, it is imperative that research be conducted in the following areas: student success and retention over time; teacher satisfaction and success online; impact of students transitioning out of an online program; and sources of resistance for implementing online programs. Through this study, we found that online learning provides more course options to students *and* course options to more students. Through carefully investigating available options, high schools have the opportunity to tailor an online education program to their overall learning philosophy and goals.

Endnotes

[1] Bruce O. Barker, Anthony G. Frisbie, and Kenneth R. Patrick, "Broadening the Definition of Distance Education in Light of the New Telecommunications Technologies," *The American Journal of Distance Education* 3:1(1989): 20-29.

[2] Von V. Pittman Jr., "The Persistence of Print: Correspondence Study and the New Media," *The American Journal of Distance Education* 1:1(1987): 31-36.

[3] Charles E. Feasley, "Evolution of National and Regional Organizations," In *Handbook of Distance Education*, Michael G. Moore and W. G. Anderson, Eds. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003), 37-47.

[4] Michael G. Moore, "Editorial: Lessons from History," *The American Journal of Distance Education* 1:1(1997): 1-5.

[5] Chris Dede, "The Evolution of Distance Education: Emerging Technologies and Distributed Learning," *The American Journal of Distance Education* 10:2(1993): 4-36.

[6] For the purposes of this article, "secondary education" is defined as high school level.

[7] Michael G. Moore, "Editorial: Institutional Restructuring: Is Distance Education Like Retailing?" *The American Journal of Distance Education* 13:1(1999): 1-7.

[8] *K-12 Distance Education Examples* (WestEd: 2000), http://www.wested.org/tie/dlrn/k12de.html.

[9] Tom Clark, "Virtual Schools: Trends and Issues: A Study of Virtual Schools in the United States," in *Distance Learning Resource Network*, A WestEd Project (Macomb, Illinois, The Center for the Application of Information Technologies, Western Illinois University, 2001), 1.

[10] Anne Davis, "Virtual Schools Hit Road in Search of Students," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (February 16, 2003), B1, B6.

[11] Anne Davis, "Kewaskum District Considering Virtual Charter School," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (January 19, 2003), B1, B2.

[12] Anne Davis, "Protest of Virtual School Planned," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (March 25, 2003), http://www.jsonline.com/news/ozwash/feb03/120977.asp#top.

[13] Susan J. Jones, "Identification of Successful Learning and Learner Support System from a 3rd Year eHighSchool Program," in *Proceedings of the 17th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning* (Madison, Wisconsin: August 2001), 217-220.

[14] Donna Weisman and Pam Birtolo, "Enquiring Minds Want to Know: The First Year of an Online High School," in *Proceedings of the 15th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning* (Madison, Wisconsin: August 1999), 425-431.

[15] Andy Zucker and Robert Kozma, *Virtual High School: Teaching Generation V* (New York: Teachers College Press 2003).

[16] Charlambos Vrasidas and Richard Chamberlain, "Managing Distance Education: Issues Behind Online Classes," in *Proceedings of the 16th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning* (Madison, Wisconsin: August 2000), 375-378.

[17] Marny D. Lawton and Mary S. Bonhomme, "A Systems Model Approach to Organizing a Distance Learning Program," in *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning* (Madison, Wisconsin: August, 1998), 221-226.

[18] Michael G. Moore and Greg Kearsley, *Distance Education: A Systems View* (New York: Wadsworth, 1996).

[19] Jim Hirsch, "Sorting through Vendors," *School Administrator* (October 2001), 12, http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/2001_10/hirsch.htm.

[20] Jennifer N. Reents, "Homegrown on the Web," *School Administrator* (October 2001), http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/2001_10/reents.htm.

[21] Steven Kalman, "Principles for Creating a Statewide Online Learning Organization: The Process and Decisions Underlying the Creation of Colorado Online Learning" (The Michigan Virtual University, 2003), http://www.uliveandlearn.com/dsp_ProgramDetail.cfm?id=c9628279%2Daf17%2D467a%2D8569%2Da5a599c7df4b&type=4;

[22] Stephen Sanders, "Virtual Education: New Opportunities, New Challenges" (Madison, Wisconsin: Department of Public Instruction, 2001), 10.

[23] "UW Consortium to Create Distance-Education AP Courses." *Education Forum* (November 2002), 6.

[24] Clark, 37.

[25] Weisman and Birtolo, 425-431.

[26] Clark, 37.

[27] Reents, "Homegrown on the Web."

[28] Ibid.

[29] Clark, 37.

[30] Davis, "Virtual Schools Hit Road in Search of Students," B1, C1.

[31] Kimberly Reeves, "Cyber Schools: Friend or Foe?" *School Administrator*, October 2001. Available from http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/2001_10/reeves.htm.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Weisman and Birtolo, 425-431.

[34] Reeves, "Cyber Schools: Friend or Foe?"

[35] Ibid.

[36] Clark, 37.

[37] Davis, "Protest of Virtual School Planned."

[38] Lawton and Bonhomme, 221-226.

[39] Kalman, "Principles for Creating a Statewide Online Learning Organization."

[40] Weisman and Birtolo, 425-431.

[41] Kalman, "Principles for Creating a Statewide Online Learning Organization."

[42] Reeves, "Cyber Schools: Friend or Foe?"

[43] For the purposes of this study, "vendor" was defined as a for-profit or nonprofit course-providing entity that develops online courses and charges a fee to individuals or schools for access to them.

APPENDIX

Survey Instrument

Online High School Information

1. What is the name and Web address of your Online High School (OHS)?

2. What is your role in the organization?

3. What year did your program start?

4. How many students are currently enrolled?

5. Please indicate which of the following terms best describe your OHS (Check all that apply):
__ State-based __ School district-based __ University partnership __ Vendor __ Other, please specify: _____

6. Does your OHS serve students outside your geographical region? __ Yes __ No

What courses does your OHS provide or support? (Check all that apply)
__ Basic graduation requirements (e.g., Algebra, English, U.S. History, etc.)
__ Test preparation (e.g., SAT, ACT, AP)
__ Unusual electives for credit, please specify: _____
__ Other, please specify: _____
__ Advanced Placement[T] courses
__ Languages
__ Technology courses

7. What are the reasons students participate in distance learning? (Check all that apply)
__ Recovering credit __ Home-schooling __ Advanced courses __ OHS diploma __ Early graduation
__ Schedule conflicts __ Home-bound (e.g., disability, long-term illness, etc.)
__ Unusual personal circumstances (e.g., pregnancy)
__ Work-related travel (e.g., parents in military, student in entertainment business, athletes, etc.)
__ Other, please specify: _____

8. Do you provide accommodation for students with special needs? __ Yes __ No

9. How do students register for courses with your online high school? (Check all that apply)
__ Parent/student registers directly with OHS
__ Student registers via High School Guidance Counselor
__ Other, please specify: _____
__ Parent/student registers; High School provides permission
__ High School registers students

Program Delivery

11. How is content delivered? (Check all that apply)
__ Via in-house online course management system
__ Via streaming video
__ Via vendor online course management system
__ Via videoconferencing (e.g., satellite, ITV, IP, ISDN)
__ Via video cassette
__ Other, please specify: _____

12. Do you work with a vendor in online course delivery? __ Yes, please specify vendor: _____ __ No

13. Who creates the online content of the courses you offer through your OHS? (Check all that apply)
__ Teachers licensed in state/district __ Qualified teachers, unlicensed __ Course-providing vendor
__ University instructors __ Other, please specify: _____

Program Evaluation

14. How do you evaluate program effectiveness? (Check all that apply)
__ Student evaluation of instructor
__ District/state-wide standardized program review
__ Other, please specify: _____
__ Student evaluation of program
__ National/regional standardized student assessment

15. What is the completion rate of students who begin courses in your OHS?
__ 0-25 percent __ 26-50 percent __ 51-75 percent __ 76-100 percent

ISSUES 1990-2005

Educational Considerations is a leading peer-reviewed journal in the field of educational leadership. Since 1990, *Educational Considerations* has featured outstanding themes and authors relating to leadership:

SPRING 1990: a theme issue devoted to public school funding. Edited by David C. Thompson, Codirector of the UCEA Center for Education Finance at Kansas State University and Board of Editors of *Educational Considerations*.

FALL 1990: a theme issue devoted to academic success of African-American students. Guest-edited by Robbie Steward, University of Kansas.

SPRING 1991: a theme issue devoted to school improvement. Guest-edited by Thomas Wicks & Gerald Bailey, Kansas State University.

FALL 1991: a theme issue devoted to school choice. Guest-edited by Julie Underwood, University of Wisconsin-Madison and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Educational Considerations*.

SPRING 1992: a general issue devoted to philosophers on the foundations of education.

FALL 1992: a general issue devoted to administration.

SPRING 1993: a general issue devoted to administration.

FALL 1993: a theme issue devoted to special education funding. Guest-edited by Patricia Anthony, University of Massachusetts-Amherst and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Educational Considerations*.

SPRING 1994: a theme issue devoted to analysis of funding education. Guest-edited by R. Craig Wood, Codirector of the UCEA Center for Education Finance at the University of Florida and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Educational Considerations*.

FALL 1994: a theme issue devoted to analysis of the federal role in education funding. Guest-edited by Deborah Verstegen, University of Virginia and member Editorial Advisory Board of *Educational Considerations*.

SPRING 1995: a theme issue devoted to topics affecting women as educational leaders. Guest-edited by Trudy Campbell, Kansas State University.

FALL 1995: a general issue devoted to administration.

SPRING 1996: a theme issue devoted to topics of technology innovation. Guest-edited by Gerald D. Bailey and Tweed Ross, Kansas State University.

FALL 1996: a general issue of submitted and invited manuscripts on education topics.

SPRING 1997: a theme issue devoted to foundations and philosophy of education.

FALL 1997: first issue of a companion theme set (Fall/Spring) on the state-of-the-states reports on public school funding. Guest-edited by R. Craig Wood (University of Florida) and David C. Thompson (Kansas State University).

SPRING 1998: second issue of a companion theme set (Fall/Spring) on the state-of-the-states reports on public school funding. Guest-edited by R. Craig Wood (University of Florida) and David C. Thompson (Kansas State University).

FALL 1998: a general issue on education-related topics.

SPRING 1999: a theme issue devoted to ESL and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse populations. Guest edited by Kevin Murry and Socorro Herrera, Kansas State University.

FALL 1999: a theme issue devoted to technology. Guest-edited by Tweed Ross, Kansas State University.

SPRING 2000: a general issue on education-related topics.

FALL 2000: a theme issue on 21st century topics in school funding. Guest edited by Faith Crampton, Senior Research Associate, NEA, Washington, D.C.

SPRING 2001: a general issue on education topics.

FALL 2001: a general issue on education funding.

SPRING 2002: a general issue on education-related topics.

FALL 2002: a theme issue on critical issues in higher education finance and policy. Guest edited by Marilyn A. Hirth, Purdue University.

SPRING 2003: a theme issue on meaningful accountability and educational reform. Guest edited by Cynthia J. Reed, Auburn University, and Van Dempsey, West Virginia University.

FALL 2003: a theme issue on issues impacting on higher education at the beginning of the 21st century. Guest edited by Mary P. McKeown-Moak, MGT Consulting Group, Austin, Texas.

SPRING 2004: a general issue on education topics.

FALL 2004: a theme issue on issues relating to adequacy in school finance. Guest edited by Deborah A. Verstegen, University of Virginia.

SPRING 2005: a theme issue on preparing educational leaders. Guest edited by Michelle D. Young, University of Missouri; Meredith Mountford, Florida Atlantic University; and Gary M. Crow, The University of Utah.