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# CAPEA

## Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development

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## Notes from the Editors

Spring 2016 Edition

Welcome to Volume 27 of *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development: The Journal of the California Association of Professors of Educational Administration (CAPEA)*. After a blind and rigorous submissions review process, the editors accepted a set of very strong contributions from a variety of perspectives. The accepted papers look at the current national trend to privatize public education, as well as on promising practices, and improvement of educational leadership preparation programs.

The papers in Volume 27 are organized into the following sections: Neoliberal Trends in Education; Alternative Epistemologies; Transformative Leadership Development, Reports from the Field and a Book Review.

This journal would not have been possible without the efforts of numerous people. We, first, thank all of the authors who contributed manuscripts. A very special thank you is offered to the Editorial Board: Angela Louque, Diane Mukerjee, Rollin D. Nordgren, Rebeca Burciaga, Noni Mendoza-Reis, Albert Jones, who worked tirelessly in the review and editing of all submissions. In addition, we would like to thank Lori Kim, CAPEA President, for her constant encouragement and support. Lastly, this journal would not exist without the support of NCPEA and NCPEA Publications, especially Brad Bizzell, who has been an invaluable member of our team.

To all readers, we hope that the journal will provide an opportunity to expand your insights into the field of school leadership and reflect on your own practice. We, furthermore, hope that this reflection brings you to a deeper commitment to our crucial work for our nation's youth and children.

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# Neoliberalism in Historical Light: How Business Models Displaced Science Education Goals in Two Eras.

Kathryn N. Hayes

## Abstract

*Although a growing body of work addresses the current role of neoliberalism in displacing democratic equality as a goal of public education, attempts to parse such impacts rarely draw from historical accounts. At least one tenet of neoliberalism--the application of business models to public institutions—was also pervasive at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A comparison between the two eras sheds needed light on the mechanisms by which business models displace educational goals. Using science education as a context, this paper draws from historical, theoretical and empirical studies to demonstrate how business paradigms disrupt science education goals related to preparation for democratic participation and equity. As evidence, this paper draw upon historical accounts, as well as findings from a mixed-methods study of how accountability and related institutionalization of business models impacts equity in elementary science education. Institutional theory provides a framework for interpreting the mechanisms of disruption in both eras.*

## Key words

Neoliberalism, Science education; Institutional theory; Equity

“... The problem with public education is it’s not operated effectively...It’s got to be about whether students, teachers and administrators are performing. That’s a core principle of accountability. It applies in a business community and it applies just as well in the academic communities.” --Joel Klein, Chancellor of New York City schools, November 10, 2010<sup>i</sup>

“One may easily trace an analogy between these fundamentals of the science of industrial management and the

organization of a public school system.” –Joseph S. Taylor, New York City school superintendent, 1912<sup>ii</sup>

The application of neoliberalism to educational management has born increasing scrutiny by scholars worldwide (e.g., Apple, 2001; Doherty, 2007; Giroux & Giroux, 2009; Ravitch, 2010; Small, 2011). They argue that the conflation of Friedman-based economic rationality and politics has resulted in the wholesale application of private sector management approaches to the public sphere, including relying on competition, consumer choice, and other market forces for regulation of public education (Doherty, 2007; Gabbard, 2007; Small, 2011). As Doherty (2007) described, “It would be the market, not the state, which would bring about improvement in the education system” through rewarding efficiency and productivity (p. 276). In the United States neoliberal strategies implemented increasingly since the 1980’s have resulted in increasing standardization of curriculum at the national level, an accountability system to measure performance and ensure competition and efficiency, and a variety of school choice programs (Hursch, 2005).

However, although neoliberalism as defined arose in the 1970’s (Small, 2011), market and business management approaches have been seductive to educational policy makers cyclically over the last 150 years (Gabbard, 2007), and particularly at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cuban, 2004). Despite the historical precedence, attempts to parse the impacts of neoliberalism in education today rarely draw from historical accounts. Comparisons between the two eras shed light on the mechanisms by which private sector management approaches exerted influence on public education, simultaneously illuminating the spaces of acquiescence and resistance. This article thus grounds the discussion of recent neoliberalism in the historical—specifically how the infusion of educational policy with business model paradigms in two time periods displaced science education goals related to equity and preparation for democratic citizenship. As evidence, I draw upon both historical accounts and findings from my mixed-methods study of the roles of accountability and related institutionalization of business models in determining equity in elementary science education. Institutional theory provides a framework for interpreting the mechanisms of displacement--how

schools as organizations respond to the forces embedded in societal movements such as neoliberalism.

### **Neoliberalism: An historical comparison**

Many aspects of neoliberalism have deep roots in Western history. With the growth of capitalism, aspects of what is today labeled neoliberalism influenced politics and law in the United Kingdom and the United States over the last several hundred years (Gabbard, 2007). This process led to the infusion of state law with capitalist ideologies, resulting in poor laws (associating the poor with indolence), privatization of the commons, and the argument that eliminating restrictions on trade and commerce is in the best interest of all citizens (Gabbard, 2007; Quigley, 1996). Although the ability of industry to establish the cooperation of the state waxed and waned with the political challenges afforded by the labor movement and other populist democratic efforts (Gabbard, 2007), the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period of industry ascendance, wherein business and industrial values held a position of influence resulting in a saturation of public institutions with business practices (Callahan, 1964). Hence, although neoliberalism is characterized by conditions specific to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century such as globalization, many of the ideologies foundational to neoliberalism were applied during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, extolled as scientific management, business models, or efficiency.

In order to understand the displacement of science education goals in two eras, this paper focuses on aspects of neoliberalism common to both eras--specifically the application of business models to public institutions. In education, business models in both eras have included increased standardization, accumulation of power at higher levels of governance<sup>iii</sup>, measures aimed at increasing efficiency, and a focus on social mobility and work preparation through individual merit (Callahan, 1964; Cuban, 2004; Doherty 2007; Hirsch, 2005) Although choice and privatization are key elements of current neoliberal paradigms, because these practices were less pervasive at the turn of the century, they are omitted from this analysis.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the pervasive influence of business ideology in education was characterized by efficiency, productivity and a mission to prepare students for work (Callahan,

1964, Kliebard, 1987; Montgomery, 1994). What Callahan (1964) termed *the cult of efficiency* was being applied across entire school systems, utilizing the language of scientific management to inspire regimentation in the school day: “Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products [children] are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life” (Cubberley, 1916; quoted in Callahan, 1964, p 97). The reforms were implemented in part to increase production (processing large numbers of students), and decrease the cost of schools, which were the repository of taxes and thus the ire of taxpayers (Montgomery, 1994). In addition, students were to be sorted into categories directly related to their future roles—both social and vocational (Kliebard, 1987). In order to accomplish such productivity and efficiency, according to the business leaders of the early 1900’s, schools should be “saturated with accountability” (Montgomery, 1994, p 134), giving rise the nascent standardized testing systems.

Starting in the late 1970’s, business ideology again permeated the rhetoric around education in the United States, with arguably similar (stated) goals, including justification of public funding (Ravitch, 2010), preparation for work, and social mobility by individual merit (Carter, 2005; Labaree, 1997). Leaders in government, business, and education continually invoked business models as the only possible way to fix schools (Ravitch, 2010), leading to centralized control, standardization, and a focus on “outcomes” (Cuban, 2004; Hursh & Martina, 2003). Accountability has become a primary tool in that push, on one hand associated with the rhetoric of equity and achievement for all, on the other as a tool for centralizing control, measuring production, and justifying school activities—a business model to restore America’s competitive edge in the international arena (Cuban, 2004; Madaus & Kellaghan, 1993). Through standardized testing of all students, accountability would provide a measure of school performance to the public, thus fostering competition. When coupled with school choice, market forces could then effectively increase school productivity and create the conditions for higher achievement (Doherty, 2007).

The business model in each era differed slightly in both rhetoric and application. In the early 1900’s, reformers focused on cost reduction, output, and sorting students into various careers (Callahan, 1964). Although career preparation and cost are part of the



rhetoric of today's reforms, the reforms rely more on accountability for outcomes and social mobility through individual merit. Despite these differences, similar ideologies and trends underlie the two movements. Both were likely driven by a combination of stressors—such as increased international competition (Cuban, 2004), rising immigration (Callahan, 1964), and economic uncertainty. In addition, ideological movements in each time period provided justification for business model approaches: in the case of the early 1900's, the social efficiency movement and the firm establishment of positivism were used as justification for factory models in which children and teachers were measured, judged, and sorted “objectively” (Usher, 1998). In recent times, neoliberalism and a return to post-positivist ways of interpreting social phenomena again justify the reduction of students to scores and teaching to scripts. In both time periods, government turned to business leaders to take schools out of crisis and into productivity (Cuban, 2004). Business leaders applied their familiar principles: competition, standardization, and accountability, with uncertain results for education.

### **Goals for Science Education in Two Eras**

Educational goals have been informed historically by a three-way tension between democratic equality (preparing responsible citizens within an equitable society), social efficiency (training workers), and social mobility (allowing individuals to compete for position) (Labaree, 1997). Democratic equality can be further separated into citizenship (preparing effective and responsible citizens for participation in a democracy) and equity (fairness in the distribution of educational goods for the purpose of social and political equality) (Labaree, 1997). Several scholars have made the case that during times of business model ascendancy in both eras, the goals of citizenship and equity gives way to those of social mobility and social efficiency (Callahan, 1964; Doherty, 2007; Labaree, 1997; Small, 2011). That a set of policies would reduce equity is no small charge, especially in an era when policy makers use the rhetoric of equity to forward neoliberal or business model reforms such as in the “No Child Left Behind Act” in the United States (US Department of Education, September 2002). Yet, although scholars have examined

the role of neoliberalism in fostering some goals at the expense of others, few have compared across time periods<sup>iv</sup>.

Drawing from research, historical accounts, and policies regarding elementary science education in the United States, this paper presents an examination of whether and how business models displaced educational goals of citizenship and equity across the two eras. The case comparison allows analysis to move beyond present manifestations of neoliberalism, providing the opportunity to clarify and understand explanatory mechanisms across historical time points. Elementary science education offers a salient case because in the United States, current policy language emphasizes both democratic citizenship and equity as goals for science education, and because elementary science education is particularly vulnerable to business model approaches such as accountability mechanisms. To frame the analysis of whether business models displaced science education goals, the next paragraph lays out current and past goals as described in policy and historical documents.

### **Science Education Goals at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

At the turn of the century, goals for science education fell into an amalgam of progressive project-based learning and preparation for work (Cuban, 2013). Equity was clearly a goal for some educators, including Dewey (1916). Inquiry as an instructional practice was advocated by progressives as a key element of science education, which in turn was argued by Dewey (1916) as undergirding democratic participation.

**Science Education Goals Currently.** Currently, U.S. federal policy documents describe science literacy for all as a key goal for science education (PCAST, 2010) necessary for responsible democratic participation in a highly techno-scientific society (NRC, 2012; PCAST, 2010). Science literacy in turn relies in large part on opportunity to participate in inquiry activities (such as labs) that involve students in both decision making and critical thinking (Abd-El-Khalick, et al., 2004; Forbes, et al., 2013). As in other subjects, equity in science education implies equal access to excellent science education across student populations in K-12 and beyond, as well as specific supports for bridging from student prior knowledge to science epistemologies (Calabrese Barton, 2002; Lee, et al., 2007).

Based on this evidence, it can be argued that equity and the ability to participate in democratic citizenship was a stated goal for science education in both time periods. Both are dependent on opportunities for authentic inquiry in which all students have the opportunity to engage in sense-making around scientific practices and content (NRC 2012). The next section lays out evidence as to whether and how these goals were displaced by business models in each era.

## **Effects of Business Models on Science Education: A Comparison of Two Eras**

### **Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

At the turn of the century, scientific management leaders were pushing for efficiency in schools, characterized by cost-saving procedures, mechanistic coursework, and evaluation (Cuban, 1993). At the same time, progressives were advocating implementation of child centered practices such as activity centers and project based learning. How these competing forces played out in classrooms is difficult to determine, but several noted historians have presented compelling evidence that the efficiency paradigm exerted the more pervasive influence (Cuban, 1993; DeBoer, 1991; Kliebard, 1987), displacing progressive science education goals through efficiency-based school organization, scientific management, and testing.

Organizationally, efficiency measures such as the bolting of desks to the floor and crowded classes with over 40 students encouraged a teacher-centered, mechanistic instructional practice (Cuban, 1993). Fact oriented texts bereft of inquiry procedures contributed to the lack of what progressives considered to be excellent science instructional practices, aligning with scientific management paradigms that largely considered teacher-centered mode of instruction to be (ironically) both “scientific” and efficient (Cuban 1993). In addition, eerily familiar scheduling emphasizing the basics (math and reading) left science education largely out of the K-8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum (Cuban, 1993)<sup>v</sup>. For example, the Washington DC school administration handed down a schedule which dictated 3.5 hours a day for arithmetic in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Ten other subjects had to be fit into the 5.5 hour day, leaving little time for science.

Exams instituted at the high school level in some districts impacted science education by inducing an emphasis on factual rather than procedural knowledge (DeBoer, 1991). For example, in 1925 in the New York City School District, half of high school teachers saw the Regents Exams as encouraging drill, memorization and cramming (Cuban, 1993). Thus, aside from high school laboratories, business models made inquiry based science difficult to carry out, and instead incentivized the rote and mechanistic learning already in place (Cuban, 1993). Together these processes displaced inquiry-related science education goals.

### **Science Education Currently**

In addition to the literature, the discussion of current science education draws from a mixed-methods study of elementary science in four districts<sup>vi</sup>. The broad study focused on the following research questions: 1) What is the relationship between accountability systems and teacher science instructional practice? 2) What is the role of districts as organizations in mediating this relationship? 2) How do environmental contexts mediate organizational response?

#### **Study of Science Education Goal Displacement: Methods.**

Two distinct approaches were used to first quantitatively examine the predictors of differentiation in elementary science education instructional time and methods, and second qualitatively analyze the nature and process by which these mechanisms exert influence. The study consisted of a survey of teachers (N=200) across 20 schools in one district, a corresponding qualitative case study involving interviews of two district administrators, four principals, and twenty teachers in the same district, and focus group interviews of 34 teachers and administrators in three additional districts.

**Quantitative:** The substantive role of a district in interpreting and setting policy can create statistical noise in trying to understand the *school level effects* of policy when sampling across many districts. Thus this study is focused on one district selected to be typical of California districts (mean is close to the state mean in FRL, API and percent minority), with a wide range of demographics. Random stratified sampling procedure was used to select half of the elementary schools based on API. School response rate was 90% (18 schools); teacher response rate was 71% (200 teachers). The survey

was based on Dorph, et al.'s (2011) instrument, supplemented with questions developed through a focus group process (Rea & Parker, 2005). Content validity was established through the use of six focus groups of teachers and administrators across three districts (Krueger, 1994). Face validity was tested through cognitive interviews and expert review.

Survey data were analyzed using hierarchical linear modeling to determine the comparative roles of accountability pressure, poverty, and various teacher traits in predicting amount of science education and science instructional practices. Reliability statistics are reported by variable (Table 1). Each variable was tested for assumptions violations prior to HLM modeling. HLM ensures residuals of the dependent variables are independent and normally distributed at level 2. In cases of non-normal distributions non-linear transformations were considered. All level 1 variables except grade were centered on the school mean. Prior to centering all variables were tested for interactions; none were significant. Data was examined for outliers through Cook's D, resulting in the removal of three data points. A multi-level model results in level 1 and 2 equations, each with an uncorrelated error term (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Slopes of level 1 variables were fixed at level 2 to portray how group means (intercepts) vary across schools.

Table 1  
*Description of Main Variables*

Variable	Role	Description	Nature	Reliability/Validity
Percent hands-on	Dependent	Percent of time teachers report students doing hands-on or laboratory activities (other choices include textbook, lecture, audio-visual, and demonstration)	Continuous 0-100%	In comparison with preferred percent: .797; Correlation with interview data r = .842
SE context	2 <sup>nd</sup> level Predictor	A composite of school FRL and percent underrepresented students	Continuous 0-100	Obtained: www.ed-data.k12.ca.us
AYP pressure	2 <sup>nd</sup> level Predictor	Consequences are tied to each year a school does not make AYP, thus this variable is the years out of six the school did not meet AYP	Continuous 0-6	Validated through teacher interviews; obtained www.ed-data.k12.ca.us
GRADE	Covariate	Grade level taught, reported by teacher	Dummy variables	
PD hours	1 <sup>st</sup> level Predictor	Science professional development hours over the last three years	Composite scale.	Validated through interviews.
Years taught	1 <sup>st</sup> level Predictor	Reported years taught (1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-15, 15 or more)		
Degree	1 <sup>st</sup> level Predictor	Whether they have a science degree, reported by teacher	Binary variable	
Attitude	1 <sup>st</sup> level Predictor	Average of Likert ratings for four question scale	Composite scale.	Cronbach's alpha = .817.

**Qualitative.** Following the salience of poverty context in the literature, three districts were selected across California through a purposive sampling procedure (Knapp & Plecki, 2001) to represent a high poverty context (1), a low poverty context (2), and a district with a wide poverty distribution (3) (Table1). The percent of students on Free and Reduced Lunch ranged from an average of 24% to an average of 56%, the percent underrepresented (non-White or Asian) students ranged from an average of 28% to an average of 74%. Participants were solicited through the district central office. Table 2 reports numbers of participants.

Table 2  
Focus Group Participants

District Group	# of participants	# of schools represented	Length of interview, hours
District 1 admin	4	3	1.1
District 1 teachers	7	5	1
District 2 admin	8	4	1.2
District 2 teachers	5 in separate interviews	2	2
District 3 admin	4 principals 1 administrator separately	4	1.3 .7
District 3 teachers	7	3	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.6</b>

Teachers and administrators were interviewed separately to triangulate data and to check perspectives across organizational levels (Rea & Parker, 2005). The one-hour, standardized, semi-structured interviews (Spradley, 1979) pertained to factors that influence the implementation of science education. Interview data were analyzed using an iterative inductive and deductive coding process with the purpose of understanding the institutional processes that underpin policy influence on science education.

An iterative three phase analysis allowed the research to be responsive to emic definitions while making epistemological contributions to extant theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Strauss, 1987). First, an inductive open coding of transcribed interviews (Strauss, 1987) generated a list of institutional pressures. Differentiation in organizational response began to emerge, especially in terms of levels of agency. In Phase II a second round of axial codes was constructed from both theoretical definitions and first round emic perspectives (Strauss, 1987; Eisenhardt, 1989), then tested on two interviews from each district to establish the applicability of each construct for each case (Eisenhardt, 1989). In addition, a profile of each participating school and district was created, based on comparisons across participants as well as observations, demographic, and testing data<sup>1</sup> (Eisenhardt, 1989). Phase III analysis considered conflicting theories as potential constructs. Theories that demonstrated explanatory value

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/Pages/Home.aspx>

were retained. The resulting list of constructs was re-applied to all interviews in a deductive process (Eisenhardt, 1989).

**Study of Science Education Goal Displacement: Results.**

The findings revealed that, similar to historical displacement of science education goals, current applications of the business models in these settings have contributed to inequitable distribution of science education and less inquiry-based science instruction, confirming and building on previous studies (CEP, 2007; Marx & Harris, 2006). In the empirical case presented here, analysis of survey data across 20 schools painted a picture of stark inequities: Students at elementary schools in lower income neighborhoods (the percent of students who applied for Free and Reduced Lunch averaged 88%) received one quarter the hands-on science education as students at higher income schools (Free and Reduced Lunch average 44%) in the same district. Multi-level regression analysis of variance revealed that accountability pressure had the most substantive relationship with the distribution of instructional approaches, beyond measured teacher traits (professional development, degree, attitude and experience) and student socio-economic context (Hayes & Trexler, in press). As one lower income school principal stated, “I don’t see teachers that say I don’t feel like teaching science...If it’s anything, it’s ‘we can’t because...we have to bring up our reading scores.’”

Analysis of qualitative focus group and interview data revealed that, similar to impacts at the turn of the century, tighter scheduling and scripted teaching associated with the organizational aspect of business models contributed to decreases in inquiry based science education. For example, in one lower income district the teachers who once integrated science into English Language Arts could no longer do so when the subject became structured around test preparation. In another district, the need to raise English Language Learners’ test scores led to an adoption of a scripted curriculum; teachers there who previously integrated science into their English Language Development (ELD) curriculum had to drop it in favor of text-based academic language acquisition:

“We are expected to group kids by their ELD level, so they’re not in their regular classroom, they’re grouped with like kids...And there’s a curriculum, so you could otherwise teach ELD through science but now there’s a curriculum to follow also” (Lower income school principal).



Likewise, their summer school focus shifted from enrichment, involving science education, to remediation.

In contrast, schools in a wealthier district maintained their independence, due in part to being less fettered by low test scores. In addition, they were able to draw on other community and institutional resources, such as local businesses and parents, to support science education. Parent pressure played a key role in establishing science labs across all elementary schools in the district. In that district, one school principal mentioned leveraging parents to apply for science magnet status, which might additionally result in more funding: “Now we’re looking into what is it going to entail for us to apply for [official science magnet] status. Because that gets the corporate matching...So it’s more like escalating the parents [to apply]....I already have the support, and the parents are so excited about it.”

### **Discussion**

This paper asks whether a case comparison of business model application across two eras can illuminate whether and how business models displace educational goals of citizenship and equity in science education. As to whether the displacement occurred: In both eras, scripted curriculum, accountability systems, and an efficient focus on “the basics” associated with business models displaced science education goals founded on generating science literacy through inquiry. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, principles of “scientific management” and efficiency resulted in rigid scheduling, crowded classrooms, and fixed furniture—contributing to a focus on direct instruction. Accountability systems in both time periods reduced student-based inquiry instruction in favor of fact-based, teacher-centered instruction. In addition, accountability currently has contributed to an increasingly differentiated access to science education, undermining the equity claimed by proponents of business models. Ironically, rarely did current ideologues from the business or policy communities put forth the notion that excellent science education was not a priority; on the contrary, many current business leaders tout the importance of science education<sup>vii</sup>.

As to how the displacement occurred, institutional theory provides a framework for understanding the key mechanisms. First, measurement systems, such as accountability, create a resonant

feedback loop affecting instruction (Etzioni, 1964), displacing longer term or more difficult to measure goals (i.e. focus on facts displaces a focus on critical thinking) (Etzioni, 1964). This is demonstrated in the increased teacher-focused rote instruction in schools impacted by accountability. Second, since schools tend to be isomorphic to the institutions that exert the greatest control over them (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) a tighter coupling to state institutions (through centralization, standardization, and resource control) induces a permeability to societal trends such as the application of business or management ideology. This permeability is demonstrated historically in efficiency measures such as top-down, rigid scheduling. In addition, the current empirical case shows that schools in higher poverty context—that are more dependent on state institutions for resources—may be more permeable to the effects of ideologies that have pervaded those institutions (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Conversely, schools less dependent on the state due to additional resources (such as parent funding) are less permeable to the larger institutions (the state) more permeable to local interests (the parents) (Weik, 1976). Thus wealthier schools' ability to resist accountability and draw on other resources meant they were less permeable to business model approaches emphasizing efficiency, rigid schedules, and scripted teaching, and more able to respond to local interests in favor of science education. Moreover, because poorer schools are more tightly coupled to federal and state institutions due to resource dependence and accountability, societal ideologies are able to permeate more effectively.

In sum, business models in both eras contributed to a displacement of educational goals of citizenship and equity in science education. These models operate through institutional mechanisms that tightly couple schools to the state, inducing greater permeability to pervasive business ideologies, especially in poorer, resource dependent schools. Understanding this process historically provides a foundation for educators and policy makers to mitigate the effects of neoliberalism currently.

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<sup>i</sup> Retiring NYC Schools Chief Reflects on his Tenure. All Things Considered Nov. 10, 2010. Interview by Melissa Block.

<sup>ii</sup> As quoted in Callahan, 1964, p 103.

<sup>iii</sup> Increased governmental control invokes an inherent contradiction in neoliberalism that advocates for efficiency through decentralization yet demands standardization and regulation (Hirsch, 2007). The result for education in the United States has been increased centralization of curriculum standards as well as national mandates for accountability measures.

<sup>iv</sup> With some exceptions (e.g. Cuban, 2004)

<sup>v</sup> The push toward back-to-basics curriculum derived from a slightly different but often aligned conservative movement toward “excellence in education” focused on reproducing the knowledge and values of Western culture (in recent eras championed by E.D. Hirsch).

<sup>vi</sup> A dissertation study published by U.C. Davis in 2014.

<sup>vii</sup> e.g. Tapping America’s Potential, a 2005 report by “fifteen of our country’s most prominent business organizations,” including the Business Round Table





# Modernism in School Reform: Promoting Private over Public Good

R.D. Nordgren

## Abstract

*School reform in the past several decades has taken a “modernist” bent in that it has focused on quantitatively based accountability systems modeled after business (Ravitch, 2013; Tienken & Orlich, 2013). The author uses a model devised by a Finnish scholar to demonstrate that 1) these reforms are indeed modernist, and 2) the private good is being promoted over the public good, and 3) that privatization and standardized tests are the primary tactics used to force schools to comply with this vision for schooling.*

Ever since *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, school reform has depended on a narrow interpretation of accountability; an interpretation that consists of 1) privatization in terms of school choice, vouchers, and of services - which used to be done by school employees - and 2) test scores (Ravitch, 2013; Tienken & Orlich, 2013; Wolk, 2011). Race to the Top and Common Core were preceded by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) as the *de facto* overarching P-12 schooling policies. Although Race to the Top and Common Core are policies enacted by a Democrat president and NCLB by a Republican, they both represent a worldview that believes that reality is based on what can be quantified (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014; Tienken & Orlich, 2013; Wolk, 2011). This directly conflicts with reality, according to those who hold a diametrically opposite view: Post Modernism (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; Slattery, 2006). The Bush-Obama reform policies (as well as Clinton, Bush I, and Reagan) can be categorized as Modernist in that they depend on measuring that which can be relatively easily measured and relying on extrinsic motivators to get schools, districts, and states to comply with their view of schooling (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014; Wagner, 2015; Zhao, 2014).

This article examines how privatization of schooling is used as a favored mechanism to control the direction of schools, a mechanism that is essential to “Education Modernists” who have come to dominate both sides of the political aisle. By presenting a Post Modernist alternative, it also briefly demonstrates how this pattern can be broken and meet the needs of the Post-Industrial, Post-Knowledge Age world (see Zakaria, 2015).

### **Modernism and “Global Education Reform Movement”**

Pasi Sahlberg (2011) coined the phrase “Global Education Reform Movement” (GERM) to describe the U.S.-led school reform philosophy that now encapsulates most of the developed world (2011). GERM is essentially the antithesis of how the Finns conduct schooling (Sahlberg is Finnish); a way that may be the prime reason for their successes on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exam (Schwartz & Mehta, 2011). The Finns eschew a test-centered accountability system where business models are held up as exemplars, models based on extrinsic motivation (see Pink, 2009).<sup>2</sup>

GERM correlates to Modernism through its dependency on measurement and extrinsic rewards based on competition. The “Finnish Way,” on the other hand, coincides with Post Modernism in that it is highly individualistic in delivery (yet, dependent on cooperation rather than competition) and is highly contextual, and it does not rely on “elixirs” too often prescribed by so-called research-sourced tactics (Ravitch, 2010; 2011; Tienken & Orlich, 2013; Wolk, 2011). The Finns are an individualistic society as are the nations using the Modern model of school reform; however, the Finns and other Scandinavian societies embrace a “horizontal individualism” rather than a “vertical individualism” (Triandis, 1995). The former tends to favor flat, democratic, egalitarian organizations and economic systems that have a relatively short range of incomes and wealth (Triandis, 1995; see also, Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Pickett &

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, at the end of this paper. It depicts the essential differences between GERM and the Finnish System; these are translated by Boboc and Nordgren (in press) as Modern and Post Modern school reform movements.

Wilkenson, 2011). In contrast, the latter refers to societies that have great discrepancies between rich and poor and employ systems that exacerbate these, especially those that depend on competition as the primary motivators (Pickett & Wilkenson, 2011; Picketty, 2013). Privatization of schooling and the use of tests are the two primary levers employed in societies following Modern tactics in education reform (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; see also Berliner & Glass, 2014; Henig, 2012; Zhao, 2014).

### **The Finnish Way**

Boboc and Nordgren (2014; in press) use the Finnish model as an exemplar of a Post Modernist education system based on their school reform principles (found in the Post Modern column in the Appendix) and the fact that they are highly regarded in the global education community (Ravitch, 2013). The Finns gained notoriety after the results of the 2001 PISA and subsequent administrations showed them to have one of the top education systems in the world—at least as measured by PISA<sup>3</sup> (Sahlberg, 2011). However, the Finns do not focus on such tests and, instead, press for systems-wide changes that are more qualitative than quantitative (Ravitch, 2013). Instead of dependence on standardized tests, Finnish teachers are encouraged to create their own assessments, thereby, contextualizing evaluation of student performance (Sahlberg, 2011; Schwartz & Mehta, 2011). Teachers in Finland are valued both in esteem and in financial rewards as are physicians and attorneys (Schwartz & Mehta, 2011); and with this comes a great amount of autonomy *and* responsibility. Policy makers leave educating to teachers and their principals; not interfering with the learning process and management of the schools (Ravitch 2013; Sahlberg, 2013). Universities only accept one-third of teacher education applicants and all teachers are expected to hold a master's degree (Sahlberg, 2013; Schwartz & Mehta, 2011) adding to the prestige of the profession. This focus both on autonomy and contextualization of the schooling process make the Finnish system a valid match to the tenets of Post Modernism in education which features customizing teaching and learning according to individual

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<sup>3</sup> The most recent PISA results in 2013 found the Finns to have declined, slightly. According to Sahlberg (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2014) is a lapse in leadership, a laxness that can come with knowing you are the best.

needs and the context in which teaching and learning take place (Boboc & Nordgren, 2014).

### **Privatization versus the Public Good**

The Finns use a system that supports the “public good”; that is, a belief that a collective effort will “lift all boats.” whereas GERM, or Modernist approaches, support *laissez faire* capitalism which relies on competition (Sahlberg, 2011; Schwartz & Mehta, 2011). This free enterprise-type capitalism pits one school against another competing for scarce resources (Tienken & Orlich, 2013). It also introduces “choice” as a way to increase competition and, finally, it uses privatization as “proof” that government sponsored public good enterprises are inferior to those in the private sector (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014; Ravitch, 2010; 2013). In short, this form of capitalism would have the private good to increase, while the public good to diminish to the point where it simply acts to protect the private goods of citizens (through the police force?) and of corporations (through the military?) (Reich, 2002; Weiss, 2012).

Privatization of the public good includes all social services – observe, for instance, the rapidly increased push of for-profit and of non-profit healthcare agencies, supported by public funds (Pickett & Wilkensen, 2011). In contrast, Nordic nations such as Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, overwhelmingly rely on government entities to provide these services; services such as healthcare and schooling. For instance, these three nations not only provide free university tuition, but actually provide a living stipend for students (Salhberg, 2011). Although charter school privatization became as short-lived trend in Sweden after a Center-Right political takeover in 2005, the trend was quickly reversed as public backlash forced the returning Social Democrats to increase government’s commitment to public schools (see Pollard, 2013).

Schooling, of course, is a huge expenditure for governments, especially for State governments (remember: states are compelled to support public education whereas the federal government is not). Essentially, 92% of a school’s funds come from a combination of state and local taxation (US Department of Education, n.d.). States that adopt privatization schemes allow public money to go to for-profit and non-profit - even some religious – organizations,

allegedly as a way to incite the public schools to increase quality of service (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014; Tienken & Orlich, 2013). However, a closer examination of this seemingly Modern agenda may uncover a more nefarious reason behind privatization: the destruction of the public good (Giroux, 2014; Picketty, 2012). A “starve the beast” (a phrase coined by Republicans in the 1980’s) mentality among some Modernists would have the public schools, devoid of appropriate resources, forced to fail and then close; thus, opening up more opportunities for private entities to flourish (Giroux, 2014).

In the end, education, as public good, may be reduced to warehousing those children and youth who the privatized schools spurn (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014; Ravitch, 2013). Moreover, it also does: 1) open up the \$621billion<sup>4</sup> in education expenditures to profit-seekers, 2) break teachers unions which are interestingly Modern entities, but find themselves in direct opposition to privatization schemes, and 3) “prove” that nothing should be left to the public good, because, after all, it is the private good that matters (Tienken & Orlich, 2013). This situation clearly reflects and appears connected to the philosophy of Objectivism first developed by the novelist and political activist Ayn Rand who advocated selfishness over selflessness (see Rand & Branden, 1961) and who remains a guru to many on the political right (Weiss, 2012).

## **A Clash of Worldviews**

Those on the political left have historically supported labor, schools, and other entities of the public good (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2013) yet since Clinton’s “Third Way” the Democratic Party’s policies toward school reform have been Modernist (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2013); and these policies may threaten the public good (see Giroux, 2014).

An examination of Systems Theory will help the reader better understand Post Modernism and why Modernism is so powerful in school reform today. Quantum physics explains how our physical universe is more than what we can see and measure (Wheatley, 2006). Interactions, according to the study of quantum physics, cause unpredictable results that cannot be explained in a Modernist

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<sup>4</sup> 2011-2012 figures by National Center for Education Statistics (<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=66>)

worldview (Dumm, 1988; Slattery, 2006). Essentially, everything is connected and any movement made will cause a series of events that go beyond a sequential, sensory explanation --beyond what Modernism can explain. Post Modernism allows for such unpredictability by examining everything in context, accepting the extraneous variables that confound the binary tendencies of Modernist thought as described by Foucault and Habermas (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; Dumm, 1988; Slattery, 2006).

An “educational Post Modernist” views the student within the student’s unique context, seeing her as an individual who is constantly impacted by her environment (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; Slattery, 2006). And who can be entirely different from one day to the next, if not one moment to the next. This opposes the “value-added,” Modernist notion supported by NCLB that one year of education should be applied to each child each year—as if the child were a widget and the school were a factory and teachers were assembly workers adding parts to the chassis as it passed along the line (Tienken & Orlich, 2013; Zhao, 2009, 2012, 2014). This Modernist view of education reform is also supported by the dual Race to the Top/Common Core initiative that relies on two components 1) testing to give fodder for measurement, and 2) competition for resources based on the results of testing (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; Tienken & Orlich, 2013; Ravitch, 2010; 2013).

Since *A Nation at Risk*, it has become politically detrimental for anyone in Washington or in statehouses to lay blame on any perceived problems in education on societal factors (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2013). Therefore, all blame must fall onto the shoulders of schools (Ravitch, 2010; 2013; Tienken & Orlich, 2013). Choice schemes arising from *A Nation at Risk* were to ostensibly improve quality of schools through competition that would crush the “rising tide of mediocrity” that threatened to destroy the Republic as the report’s lead author Terrence Bell put it (US Department of Education, 1983). Privatization of schools and school services was to allow for competition to make schooling more efficient, deflating bloated bureaucracies by inserting free-market strategies (Giroux, 2014; Ravitch, 2010; 2013). Clinton’s Third Way was intended to be a “compassionate conservative” approach toward government, one the 42<sup>nd</sup> president made famous in parallel with former British Prime Minister Tony Blair (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). In simplistic

terms, the political Right wanted an end to government, and the Left, more government. Clinton's (and Blair's) answer was to instill capitalist practices to improve government, a type of compromise between the two extremes (Weiss, 2012). Clinton strongly advocated early charter schools and they began to proliferate in his second administration; in reality, Clinton did more to promote Modernist school reform than his predecessors Reagan and Bush (Boboc & Nordgren, in press; Giroux, 2014).

The initial bi-partisan support of NCLB (Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy was one of the initial advocates) continued the Third Way approach, dependent on business practices, including extreme quantification of results, as the main functional mechanism (Ravitch, 2010). This continued with Race to the Top/Common Core and, today, faces very little political opposition<sup>5</sup>. As of 2015, the predominant U.S. schooling policies are Modernist and, as long as the U.S. continues to favor laissez faire capitalism, this will not change (Giroux, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

The predominant school reforms advocated by policy makers in the U.S. and other GERM nations, are really only "more of the same." They offer nothing new in terms of effective models of schooling, ones that would truly enable graduates to be prepared for the global society and economy (Nordgren, 2003; Sahlberg, 2011; Zhao, 2009; 2012; 2014). These nations seem to be stuck in a Modernist mindset, one that is conducive to the Industrial Age more than the Post-Fordist or Post-Knowledge Ages (Zakaria, 2015). If these nations and societies are to fulfill their moral obligations to their citizenry, then they must employ new Post Modern reforms such as those used in Finland and in much of Scandinavia (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Sahlberg, 2011; see also Nordgren, 2003).

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<sup>5</sup> Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders appears to be an exception supporting Post Modernist education reform (Sanders, 2011).

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**Appendix**  
**Modern/Post-Modern Teacher Education Contrasts**

<b>Modern advocates in theory and/or practice:</b>	<b>Post-Modern advocates in theory and/or practice:</b>
<p><b>1. Standardizing teaching and learning</b></p> <p>a. Setting clear, high, and centrally prescribed performance expectations for all schools, teachers, and students to improve the quality and equity of outcomes.</p> <p>b. Standardizing teaching and curriculum in order to have coherence and common criteria for measurement and data.</p>	<p><b>1. Customizing teaching and learning</b></p> <p>a. Setting a clear but flexible national framework for school-based curriculum planning.</p> <p>b. Encouraging local and individual solutions to national goals in order to find best ways to create optimal learning and teaching opportunities for all.</p> <p>c. Offering personal learning plans for those who have special educational needs</p>
<p><b>2. Focus on literacy and numeracy</b></p> <p>a. Basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and the natural sciences serve as prime targets of education reform. Normally instruction time of these subjects is increased.</p>	<p><b>2. Focus on creative learning</b></p> <p>a. Teaching and learning focus on deep, broad learning, giving equal value to all aspects of the growth of an individual's personality, moral character, creativity, knowledge, and skills.</p>
<p><b>3. Teaching prescribed curriculum</b></p>	<p><b>3. Encouraging risk-taking</b></p> <p>a. School-based and</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reaching higher standards as a criterion for success and good performances.</li> <li>b. Outcomes of teaching are predictable and prescribed in a common way.</li> <li>c. Results are often judged by standardized tests and externally administered tests.</li> </ul>	<p>teacher-owned curricula facilitate finding novel approaches to teaching and learning, and encourage risk-taking and uncertainty in leadership, teaching, and learning.</p>
<p><b>4. Borrowing market-oriented reform ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sources of educational change are management administration models brought to schools from the corporate world through legislation or national programs.</li> <li>b. Such borrowing leads to aligning schools and local education systems to operational logic of private corporations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Learning from the past and owning innovations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teaching honors traditional pedagogical values, such as teacher’s professional role and relationship with students.</li> <li>b. Main sources of school improvement are proven good educational practices from the past.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Test-based accountability and control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School performance and raising student achievement are closely tied to processes of promotion, inspection, and ultimately rewarding schools and teachers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Shared responsibility and trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gradually building a culture of responsibility and trust within the education system that values teacher and principal professionalism in judging what is best for students.</li> </ul>

<p>b. Winners normally gain fiscal rewards, whereas struggling schools and individuals are punished. Punishment often includes loose employment terms and merit-based pay for teachers.</p>	<p>b. Targeting resources and support to schools and student who are at risk to fail or to be left behind.</p> <p>c. Sample-based student assessments.</p>
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# Exploring the School Climate -- Student Achievement Connection: Making Sense of Why the First Precedes the Second

Albert Jones  
John Shindler

Many educators view school climate and student achievement as separate considerations. For some, the idea of promoting a high quality climate can seem like a luxury in the face of the current high stakes assessment climate in which student achievement gains are the paramount consideration. However, the results of this study suggest that climate and student achievement are related. In fact, the quality of the climate appears to be the single most predictive factor in any school's capacity to promote student achievement.

The school climate – student achievement connection has been well-established in the research (Freiberg, Driscoll, & Knights, 1999; Hoy, & Hannum, 1997; Kober, 2001; Loukas, & Robinson, 2004; Norton, 2008; Shindler, et al., 2004). While this relationship would not be news to most school administrators or teachers, considerations of climate are most often viewed as secondary. Likewise few would endorse neglecting the quality of the climate at one's school, yet the minority of schools have systematic approaches to promoting or maintain the quality of their climate. In many cases, the reason for the casual approach to climate is that it is not well understood and/or is viewed as a discrete consideration - unrelated to such things as pedagogical practice, achievement goals, curriculum, and teacher development. When school climate is defined narrowly, it can appear as a relatively independent factor. However, when viewed contextually, it becomes clear that it is related to *everything* else. In a study of urban public schools, Jones et. al. (2003) found that all of the various aspects of climate were correlated to one another at most schools. Where one variable was found to be either high or low, the others were as well. In other words, no cases were found in which one variable, such as the discipline culture was low and another such as student interactions was high.

After nearly a decade of putting climate on the back burner, a growing number of states are elevating climate back to a front line issue in the broader effort to improve achievement and reduce the achievement gap. For example, the California Superintendent's P-16 Council Report (January, 2008) entitled "*Closing the Achievement Gap*" identified formally assessing and addressing school climate as an essential component in any schools' effort toward successful reform, achievement and making a difference for underprivileged student groups.

While more direct methods of intervention with the goal of improving student achievement make sense, if the basic structure of a school is dysfunctional, its capacity to promote its desired goals is limited (Fullan, 2003). Examining the student achievement trends from the past few years, the data shows what could best be described as stagnation in the effort to improve test scores and the decrease the unacceptably large size of the achievement gap (NAEP, 2008). This may suggest that the common practice of adding isolated or piecemeal reforms has not produced the kinds of results that were hoped for (Norton, 2008). Placing climate at the heart of the reform process may provide the mechanism to situate problems and solutions more effectively, so that they can be better diagnosed, assessed and mapped.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between student academic achievement and various elements within the domain of school climate, and to examine the nature and potential causality of that relationship. The paper also seeks to derive implications for practice including a possible fundamental conceptual framework for climate quality and function and an operational roadmap for moving from a less functional to more functional climate.

### **Methods**

The study examined school climate and achievement at 30 urban public schools. The sample of schools was drawn from a large geographical area and reflected schools from diverse ethnic and socio-



economic communities. Each school assessment team administered the Alliance for the Study of School Climate (ASSC) School Climate Assessment Instrument (SCAI). The team at each school incorporated a standard protocol and surveyed a minimum number of participants (N= 30+ students, 10+ teachers as well as 10+ staff and parents, with most sample sizes being larger). Focus group data were also collected. California State Academic Performance Index (API) and Similar School Rating (SIM) scores (published by the state), were used to measure student achievement at each school.

The SCAI was designed to achieve an in-depth examination of the health, function and performance of each school. While the term “school climate” was judged the best description for the intent of the instrument, it examines the construct of climate broadly, and includes 8 distinct dimensions. Those dimensions are:

1. Appearance *and* Physical Plant
2. Faculty Relations
3. Student Interactions
4. Leadership/Decision Making
5. Discipline Environment
6. Learning Environment
7. Attitude *and* Culture
8. School-Community Relations

Items within the SCAI are structured to reflect 3 levels – high, medium, and low functioning. There is descriptive language for each level of each item. Participants are asked to rate their experience of their school on each item. Example items from the SCAI can be seen in Figure A.

5. Discipline Environment				
Level - 3		Level - 2		Level - 1
high	high-middle	middle	middle-low	low
5.c.-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----				
Most teachers use effective discipline strategies that are defined by logical consequences and refrain from punishments or shaming.	Most teachers use some form of positive or assertive discipline but accept the notion that punishment and shaming are necessary with some students.	Most teachers accept the notion that the only thing the students in the school understand is punishment and/or personal challenges.		
5.e.-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----				
Maximum use of student-generated ideas and input.	Occasional use of student-generated ideas.	Teachers make the rules and students should follow them.		
5.i.-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----				
Management strategies consistently promote increased student self-direction over time.	Management strategies promote acceptable levels of classroom control over time, but are mostly teacher-centered.	Management strategies result in mixed results: some classes seem to improve over time, while others seem to decline.		

Figure A. A Sample of Three Items from Scale 5 (Discipline Environment) of the ASSC School Climate Assessment Instrument (SCAI)

High, medium and low level items in the SCAI correspond to overall levels of school function and performance. Figure B depicts the characteristics of these 3 levels. At the core of what defines a high functioning school includes a high degree of organizational intentionality, collaborative effort, reflective practice and a pervasive orientation toward achievement that could be classified as a “psychology of success (POS) (Figure C). Social contexts such as schools tend to promote either more “psychology of success” (POS) or more “psychology of failure” (POF). Every pedagogical and administrative action could be judged to promote either more POS or POF. Therefore, items within the ASSC SCAI reflected this construct theoretically as well as its practical indicators.

	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>System</b>	<b>Intentional</b>	<b>Semi-Intentional</b>	<b>Accidental</b>
<b>Ethos</b>	Sound vision translated into effective practice	Good intentions translated into practices that “work.”	Practices defined by the relative self-interest of faculty and staff
<b>Effect on Students</b>	<b>Liberating</b> Experience changes students for the better	<b>Perpetuating</b> Experience has a mixed effect on students	<b>Domesticating</b> Experience has a net negative effect on students
<b>Staff relations</b>	<b>Collaborative</b>	<b>Collegial</b>	<b>Competitive</b>
<b>Psychology of Achievement</b>	<b>Promotes a Psychology of Success (POS)</b>	<b>Promotes a Mixed Psychology</b>	<b>Promotes a Psychology of Failure (POF)</b>

*Figure B.* Theoretical Construct for Each of the Three Levels of the ASSC School Climate Assessment Instrument (SCAI).

<b>Psychology of Success (POS)</b>	<b>Psychology of Failure (POF)</b>
Internal Locus of Control	External Locus of Control
Belonging & Acceptance	Alienation and Worthlessness
Mastery Orientation	Helpless Orientation

*Figure C.* Sub-factors for the Theoretical Construct of Achievement Psychology

### **Success Psychology as Conceptual Framework for High Functioning Climate and a Predictor of Achievement**

As we examine the idea of a “psychology of success” what becomes evident is that several familiar concepts are rooted in this common phenomenon. The concepts of self-esteem, achievement psychology, intrinsic motivation, needs satisfaction, and success psychology are all rooted in the same fundamental components. They are:

1. Growth versus fixed ability orientation as related to one’s self-efficacy
2. A sense of belonging and acceptance versus alienation and worthlessness
3. Internal versus external locus of control

Paring the research in this area down, these three essential factors emerge to explain the degree to which a student has a psychological orientation toward success or failure. Moreover, there are a large number of studies to indicate that each of the three factors is correlated with academic success (Auer, 1992; Benham, 1993; Dwecj, 2000; Klein & Keller, 1990; Joseph, 1992; Rennie, 1991). As

we examine each factor independently their efficacy becomes more evident.

**Growth vs. Fixed Ability.** Carol Dweck (2000; 2006) and her colleagues in their research over the course of 30 years have developed a very useful paradigm with which to examine academic self-concept, achievement, and motivation. They have demonstrated in a series of studies with students (Dweck, 2000; 2006) that future success is not as much the result of talent (i.e., fixed ability factors) or current level of ability, as it is the result of the orientation/cognitive strategy one uses to approach learning tasks (i.e., a growth mindset). Research of others (Davis, 1992) and personal reflection support the notion that the level of one's sense of competence (or self-efficacy) will relate to the level of self-esteem. We of course want our students to experience healthy levels of self-esteem. However, the different cognitive strategies that one might choose to use to attain that sense of competence will not accomplish the same result, especially in the long term. Dweck offers a useful lens for distinguishing two contrasting cognitive strategies for feeling competent and how over time they have dramatically different results. When a student uses a growth orientation they view a situation as an opportunity to learn and grow. They do not see their performance within a situation as a measure of their innate ability as much as a measure of their investment (better results require more practice). Students who approached tasks with a fixed ability orientation viewed the context as a reflection of how much ability they innately possessed in that area. The result is a student who is looking for situations that will not challenge their fragile self-image or make them feel "dumb." Dweck (2000) found that students with a growth pattern were more likely to persist in the face of failure and experience higher levels of academic achievement. The gap in achievement between the growth and fixed students was found to expand as students got older (Dweck, 2000).

**Acceptance and Belonging vs. Alienation and Worthlessness.** This second factor within the framework for a "success psychology" reflects the degree to which any member feels wanted and part of the group, and the degree to which one likes and accepts one's self. The more one feels accepted and acceptable, the more one will be able to express one's self, act authentically and be fully present to others (Osterman, 2000). Self-acceptance is in contrast to self-aggrandizement or a compulsion to please. A sense of

belonging and acceptance is essential to a young person's mental health and ability to trust and take risks (Shann, 1999; Shindler, 2009). It comes in part from accepting messages from VIPs (including self-talk), practicing a positive approach and attitude, experiencing emotional safety, and feeling a part of a community.

Research has shown a relationship between a sense of belonging with acceptance and self-esteem (Katz, 1993; Osterman, 2000; Shann, 1999). Moreover, building a sense of classroom belonging and the sense of self- and peer-acceptance has been shown to promote higher achievement (Dembrowsky, 1990; Rhoades & McCabe, 1992; Sanders, & Rivers, 1996).

**Internal vs. External Locus of Control.** The third factor in the construct of "success psychology" is defined by one's sense of internal causality and orientation toward personal responsibility. The more internal locus of control (LOC) we possess, the more we feel that our destiny is in our own hands. It could be contrasted to an external LOC or an orientation that views *cause* as an external factor and one in which life "happens to us." An internal locus of control can be defined as the belief that one is the author of his or her own fate. An internal locus of control comes from having a causal understanding of behavior and effect. It is learned from freely making choices and taking responsibility for the consequences of those choices. Through responsible action and accountability for those actions, the young person learns to attribute the cause of success or failure internally. Consequently, he or she feels a sense of power and responsibility and is able learn from his or her life experience. Another term we could use for internal locus of control is "personal empowerment."

Research has drawn a strong relationship between levels of student self-esteem and sense of an internal locus of control (Hagborg, 1996; Klein & Keller, 1990; Sheridan, 1991). Moreover, studies have shown repeatedly that students with higher degrees of internal locus of control demonstrate higher levels of achievement (Auer, 1992; Park & Kim, 1998; Tanksley, 1993). In fact, having high levels of internal LOC have been shown to be an even more significant predictor of achievement than intelligence or socioeconomic status (Hagborg, 1996). In addition, higher internal LOC has also been shown to mediate the stress response (Ayling, 2009; Meaney 2001).

Taken together these three interdependent variables make up a comprehensive explanation for why some students achieve more of their potential, and why some contexts promote more students meeting more of their potential. These factors influence students' growth in all aspects of their lives, yet the effect of what takes place in schools makes up a significant amount of their influence.

### **Findings**

The results of the study confirmed a strong relationship between the quality of school climate and academic achievement levels. Overall, at least seven study conclusions appear to be supported by the data. First, consistent with previous research the data showed that the quality of school climate decreased as students moved from the Elementary to Secondary School level. Second, achievement was shown to be highly correlated to overall mean school climate (SCAI) ( $r=+0.7$ ). Third, achievement was also shown to correlate with all eight SCAI climate and function indicators, including a very substantive correlation coefficient for classroom discipline practices ( $r=+0.7$ ). Fourth, all eight of the climate factors at each of the 21 schools tended to be highly inter-related. This suggests that factors are highly inter-dependent. Fifth, SCAI was positively correlated to Similar School rating (SIM,  $r=+0.3$ ). This suggests that schools that have better climates are more effective at promoting the achievement with their students relative to schools with similar students and less functional climates. Sixth, similarly, when socio-economic status was adjusted for, the correlation between the SCAI scores and the achievement scores grew more prominent ( $r=+0.8$ ). Seventh, intra-school data showed similar variation. The experience of climate for students within each school also varied relative to academic track of the student group. Students in lower performing tracks identified different practices being the norm than their higher track peers, and experienced lower quality climates.

In general the high correlation coefficients (See Figure D) between school climate and achievement suggest that they are strongly related. While the direction of the causality between the two variables is not entirely indicated by the data, the substantial relationship between climate and SIM rating suggest that a conclusion

can be drawn that, to a good degree, better climates led to achievement, and were not simply a byproduct.

	SCAI - School Climate	API 2007	Similar School	Scale 4 Leadership	Scale 5 Discipline	Scale 6 Instruction	Scale 7 Att/Cult
SCAI - School Climate	---	+0.7	+0.3	+0.7	+0.9	+0.7	+0.9
API 2007	<b>+0.7</b>	----	+0.1	+0.5	<b>+0.7</b>	+0.6	+0.7
Adjusted Achievement Rating	<b>+0.8</b>	----	----	+0.6	<b>+0.8</b>	+0.7	+0.7
Similar School	<b>+0.3</b>	+0.1	----	<b>+0.3</b>	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1
Scale 5 Discipline	+0.9	+0.7	+0.1	+0.8	----	+0.8	+0.8
Scale 6 Instruction	+0.7	+0.6	+0.1	+0.8	+0.8	----	+0.8
Scale 7 Att/Cult	+0.9	+0.7	+0.1	+0.8	+0.8	+0.8	----

Figure D. Correlation Table Achievement by Climate Factors

A scatter plot distribution of each school's SCAI rating (1-low to 9-high) by API scores (200-low to 1000-high) shows a distinct pattern, as depicted in Figure I. Higher levels of climate corresponded to higher levels of academic achievement.

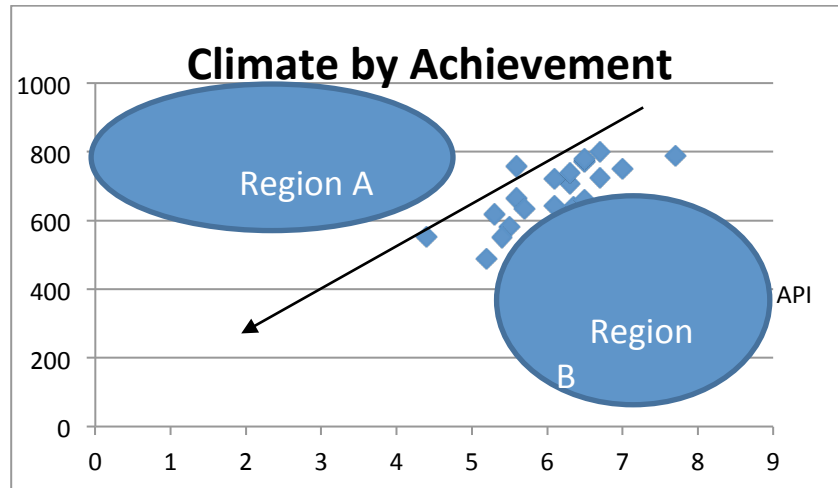


Figure E. Line Graph Derived from a Scatter Plot of Achievement Scores by Climate/SCAI

When individual school climate ratings are graphed against achievement (i.e., API) scores, the 0.7 correlation can be seen in the

scatter plot diagram (See Figure E). The figure illustrates that as SCAI climate scores increase so does achievement. In this data set there were no outliers from this trend line. Region A in Figure E represents a score combination of low climate and high achievement. Region B represents the inverse – low achievement and high quality climate. Cases in which a school scored in either of these regions of this graph were absent from this set of schools and appear unlikely to exist elsewhere (An informal unscientific survey of the hundreds of schools in the region that the members of research team had visited found that none would be classified as falling in either Region A or B).

### **Limitations**

Limitations of the findings of the study are recognized. The size of the sample, potential participant bias, and state's imprecise system for calculating SIM score all contribute to the potential for bias data. Yet, while the findings are not intended to reflect statistical significance or generalizability, the data do suggest substantive effect sizes and reflect similar findings to previous research in which similar conclusions were drawn.

### **Study Implications**

The results of the study have both theoretical and practical implications. First, they offer a better theoretical understanding of the nature of student achievement, causes of the achievement gap and the role that school climate plays. Second they imply practical considerations for teachers and administrators attempting to increase student achievement and reduce the achievement gap at their schools.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings of the study suggest a series of general and theoretical implication for the field of education including the following:

1. It appears higher quality climates lead to higher levels of student achievement.



2. High student achievement test score means appear virtually impossible within the context of a school with a low quality/functioning climate.
3. Dimensions of school climate were found to be highly correlated at each site indicating that dimensions are strongly interdependent. This implies that change within one discrete dimension will be influenced by the effects of the others.
4. It is questionable to assume that implementing isolated, de-contextualized, add-on programs within a school where the climate is of fundamentally poor quality will achieve the desired effect.
5. In the absence of a deliberate attempt to improve the quality of the climate and the function of a school it can be assumed that quality of school climate will continue to get worse on average from grade to grade.
6. Surface indicators of achievement may not offer enough information to judge progress toward school improvement. Measures of the systemic function level seem to be necessary as well.
7. It appears that the use of practices that promote a “psychology of success” POS lead to greater achievement and higher quality climate, and those that promote a “psychology of failure” POF lead to underperformance.
8. Intentionally using practices that promote climate function and POS and reducing those that promote POF may likely increase achievement for all groups of students.

### **Practical Implications**

The implications for educational practitioners include the following:

1. Consider the consequences of acquiescence to the status quo. Consistent with previous research, the results of this study suggest that the default approach to teaching and school organization has in great measure created the conditions for low achievement and the achievement gap. If we do not make fundamental changes to what are doing, why would we assume that we will get substantially different results from what we have to date?

2. Assess your school's climate. It appears that starting with a clear sense of the health and function level of the school is necessary to accurately diagnose what is and is not working. We need to know where we are before we can know where we want to go.
3. Identify desirable and undesirable practices. As part of the school self-assessment, it makes sense to evaluate the practices at your school to determine which are promoting either a healthy or unhealthy school climate. Consistent with previous research, the findings of the study suggest that all areas of school performance are inter-dependent. Therefore every neglected or dysfunctional area of school performance is dragging down the larger effort to promote school achievement.
4. Classify practices as either POS and POF promoting. As a collective set of stakeholders identify which common practices at the school would best be characterized as POS promoting and which are POF promoting. The appendices available from ASSC and the book *Transformative Classroom Management* (Shindler, 2009) will be a helpful starting point. However, the more this construct is developed as a personally meaningful concept to each member of the school community the more effectively it will be implemented.

### **A List of Some Practices that Can be Inferred to Create Either a Psychology of Success or Psychology of Failure**

Examples of some practices that promote a psychology of success

1. Cause-and-effect and clarity
2. Process focus (especially with assessment)
3. Student collective identity and sense of belonging
4. Meaningful work
5. Student responsible, choice and voice
6. Emotional safety

Examples of some practices that promote a psychology of failure

1. Comparison and excessive competition
2. Public shaming
3. Assessment as a form of "gotcha"

4. Punishments as consequences
5. Meaningless work
6. Emphasis on end products
7. Colored cards and other gimmicks
8. Bribes, praise, and other extrinsic rewards

When most educators examine the POS promoting list, few of the items surprise them. Most schools are attempting to promote at least some level of each of these outcomes. The differences between schools in this regard usually relate to the level of commitment and degree of deliberateness with which they attempt to actualize these outcomes at their site. However, when educators examine the POF promoting list, they recognize many of the items to be common practices used at their schools. In fact, often they find that these POF practices are classified within the taxonomy of what is considered “desirable practice.” For example, few teachers are aware that their colored card or names on the board behavior modification systems or their use of personal praise and disappointment are actually promoting a POF, undermining the prospects of each student’s long-term achievement and promoting the expansion of the achievement gap. In most cases, the greatest effect on climate as well as achievement will likely come from the practices that schools cease doing rather than what they add to what they are already doing.

5. Reflect on limiting personal assumptions. When we or other members of the school use phrases such as “this is what these students need,” we need to reflect on what is being implied. It often implies that we assume that low performing students need to be taught with school level 1/POF promoting methodologies. The use of these practices can seem necessary as these students may respond to that form of treatment in a way that makes everyone most comfortable. Yet, the results of this study supports earlier research that suggests that teaching *any* students in a level 1 (i.e., high conformity, lower level thinking, shame-based) context actually promotes lower levels of achievement and an expansion of the achievement gap over time. Unfortunately many well intentioned teachers are working hard at promoting low achievement and an achievement gap under the assumption that what they are

doing is best for the students with whom they work i.e., they mistakenly assume that region A results are possible). When we use POS promoting practice, they have the most significant impact on those that lack a POS. And when we use POF promoting practices we reinforce POF in those that are least resilient and most susceptible to their ill effects. The data from this study suggests that the practices that define the level 3 category in the ASSC SCAI will lead to the highest level of achievement and greatest level of POS for all students.

### **Conclusion**

We have all heard someone make the statement that in so many words “teaching is not rocket science.” Yet, it seems that producing high achievement in traditionally low achieving schools and solving the achievement gap may be on that order. It may require solutions that require thinking that goes far beyond where common sense has led us up to this point. It may require a broader and deeper perspective on the problem and a rethinking of some basic design thinking in the system. An understanding of the role school climate plays in the development of student achievement appears to be a critical piece of that effort.

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# Saving the Lost Boys: Narratives of Discipline Disproportionality

Mariama Smith Gray

## Abstract

*In this article, I explore how discriminatory adult practices disproportionately involve Latino boys in the juvenile justice system. I use the critical methodologies of critical ethnography, critical discourse analysis and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to provide a race-centered analysis of decision-making in student discipline. My findings reveal that ideologies/narratives of white innocence and Latino male criminality led adults to more frequent surveillance of Latino male students which, in turn, contributed to their overrepresentation in the referral process and punitive disciplinary outcomes from suspension to removal, as well as greater contact with law enforcement. I highlight the case of Galvan, a Latino male student, as an example of the practices of inequitable student discipline. I conclude with an explanation of effective research-based practices that reduce racial disproportionalities in student discipline and create safer, more equitable schools.*

By the time I met Galvan Gonzalez<sup>6</sup> in the assistant principal's office, School Resource Officer (SRO) Ethan Smith had already labeled the slight 14-year-old a "gang member." Galvan attended ninth grade at Californiatown High School (CHS), located in Pelica, an agricultural community in Northern California that SRO Smith and others described as facing a "gang crisis." I first met Galvan in March 2012 after he received an office discipline referral (ODR) for arriving late to class. I watched as Galvan quietly accepted his consequence without incident and left the office. Later that week, I saw Galvan again when he returned to the assistant principal's office on another attendance matter. It was then that I learned that the polite, unremarkable-looking boy had been arrested for felony assault after

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<sup>6</sup> I have assigned pseudonyms to the participants, the school and town where this story occurs to protect their identity.

participating in a “gang-related” fight at school the past February. By 2014 Galvan was incarcerated.

Although Galvan was arrested for felony assault and accused of being in a gang, the evidence against him was questionable. The video footage of the fight was unclear so SRO Smith had to interview student witnesses to determine what occurred. Evidence from a witness named Justo suggests that Galvan may have acted in self-defense and may have been fighting several students at once. Justo explained that during the fight against Chico, Galvan tripped and fell backward. “I thought he was going to let him up,” the witness said, but Chico did not let Galvan up and “they went toe to toe.” Justo’s description of the events made it appear the fighters were engaged in what officials at the school call mutual combat. Justo’s description had Galvan falling, Arturo entering the fight on his behalf and one of the three falling again. “He fell on him then went toe to toe,” Justo described. I wasn’t sure who fell on who during the fight, but the next description of the fight explained why Galvan was arrested. “Chico looked like he didn’t know where he was at,” Justo explained. SRO Smith, the school resource officer assigned to Californiatown High School (CHS), later described Chico’s injury as “a boxer’s cut”. SRO Smith later explained that the charge for felony assault was due to the “traumatic injury” Chico sustained during the fight.

Given Galvan’s relationship with SRO Smith, it is not surprising that he was charged with a felony or positioned as a member of a gang. SRO Smith was a police officer who also worked patrol and was a member of the department’s Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. Although he couldn’t remember the details of their meeting nor how he learned so much about Galvan’s personal history, SRO Smith recalled they first met in his neighborhood. Galvan had “got[ten] in trouble” in Los Angeles, where his father lived. “[H]e was on probation that was gang related” and “then moved back here with another parent and got in trouble” (Field Notes: 3/1/12). According to SRO Smith, he tried to talk to Galvan but “he doesn’t believe Galvan will change or wants to get out, doesn’t believe Galvan is listening” (Field Notes: 3/1/12).

At CHS, Latino male students like Galvan are more likely to receive a teacher referral and experience punitive disciplinary consequences than White students when they violate school rules. In a discussion about the school culture, Anny, a bi-racial White and

Latina assistant principal (AP), described her concern that CHS teachers lacked understanding of the “Latino community” (Field Notes, April 19, 2013). As if to punctuate her statement, Anny pulled out a stack of orange fast passes, the referrals that allow teachers to bypass the school’s more progressive student discipline plan that requires teacher interventions and instead refer a student directly to an administrator. Moments after we pored over the fast passes, I wrote in my field notes:

“We count the first stack and notice there are far more Latinos and males than Whites and females. Anny takes more out of her drawer. I bend over at her desk and count them all. There is a 5:1 ratio of Latino to White referrals. Of the 71 referrals or Fast Passes, 11 are for White children and 60 are for students of color.”

The fast pass story illustrates the racial disproportionality in student discipline that begins at the classroom level and continues through every point of contact in the continuum. Latinos, who made up 60.2% of the CHS student population, were overrepresented in In School Suspension (77.56%), home suspension (70.8%), expulsions (68.5%) and referrals to the district continuation school (90%). Today, a growing body of research has linked the disproportionate punishment of Latino boys to a “complex interaction of behavioral, student and school characteristics” (Skiba et al., 2014, p. 648). This case study focuses on these complex interactions in an effort to contribute to our understanding of the role that school plays in the school to prison pipeline.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The disproportionate discipline of students of color has long been acknowledged. Since the Children’s Defense Fund’s landmark study in 1975, we have known that administrator and teacher practices of student discipline have discriminated against African-American students, and, likely, Latinos. These practices, in turn, have had serious consequences in the lives of black and brown youth, including loss of the opportunity to learn (Rausch and Skiba, 2004), academic failure (Arcia, 2006; Rausch and Skiba, 2004; Davis and Jordan, 1994), drop out (Cataldi et al., 2009) and greater involvement with the juvenile justice system (Costenbader and Markson, 1998), among others. The literature has documented the fact of racial, (Peguero and

Shekarkhar, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011), class (Morris, 2005) and gender (Rios, 2011; Peguero and Shekarkhar, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011) disparities in student discipline for Latino students.

The socio-demographic characteristics of punished youth show a strong interaction between race, class and gender. The data show that male gender is strongly correlated with punishment (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Gregory, 1996; Lietz & Gregory, 1978, McFadden et al., 1992, Raffaele-Mendez, 2002; Skiba et al., 2002). Boys are more likely to be held for after school detention (Wallace et al., 2008), referred to the office (Wallace, 2008), assigned in school suspension (US Department of Education OCR, 2014), suspended (Skiba et al., 2014), expelled from school (US Department of Education OCR, 2014) and make up the bulk of the juvenile justice system (Burns Institute, 2013; Hockenberry & Puzanchera, 2014).

Student discipline is not only gendered, but also shot through with race and class (Bettie, 2003; Ferguson, 2000). One indicator of poverty, students who receive free and reduced lunch, shows that the poor are at increased risk for suspension (Skiba et al., 1997, Wu et al., 1982). Students whose parents are wealthy report receiving comparatively milder disciplinary consequences than their poor classmates (Skiba et al., 2002). While the data show that gender and class may mediate student discipline, a separate body of work has demonstrated the mediating effects of race in student discipline decisions (Arcia, 2006, 2007; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Gregory et al, 2011; Monroe 2005 a, b, 2006, 2009; Raffaele Mendez et al, 2002; Peguero and Shekarkhar, 2011; Skiba, 1997; Skiba et al, 2002, 2011; Verdugo and Glenn, 2002).

A review of the research has shown that we know far less about the adult practices that lead to the disproportionate treatment of students by race, class or gender. Edward Morris' study at Matthews Middle School is one of the few studies that reveals the way in which race, class and gender intersect in student discipline. It is worth quoting Morris at length:

Latino boys in this setting endured adult assumptions that because of their race and gender, they had the potential for danger and should be monitored and disciplined accordingly. Overcoming this assumption required displays of cultural capital from Latino boys in the form of dress and manners not

required of other students, especially White and Asian American students, whose race often seemed to represent cultural capital in itself. Through these displays, Latino boys could signal a middle-class background, which reduced the surveillance and discipline directed at them. By contrast, adults viewed Latinos and Latinas who displayed a non-middle-class “street-based” persona as oppositional. The negative perceptions of this class-based display were especially acute for Latino boys, however. Thus, for Latino boys in particular, adults’ perceptions of their class could alter perceptions of their race and masculinity (2005, p.44-45).

Thus, when educators read the everyday dress and comportment of students through a lens of racial, gender or class difference, they often engage in more punitive disciplinary practices for Latino students and other students of color than they would for similarly behaving White and middle class students.

While an abundance of research has shown that race, class and gender intersect to affect student discipline outcomes (Bettie, 2000; Morris, 2005; Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011; Rios, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011), the literature has primarily focused on the experiences of African-American and White youth. A review of the research shows that Latinos are missing in studies, publications and policy discussions about student discipline and juvenile justice. The available data, nonetheless, is troubling. Although Latino youth represent 8% of California’s youth (Arya, Villaruel, Villanueva & Augarten, 2009), they are overrepresented among youth arrested (51%) (Arya, Villaruel, Villanueva & Augarten, 2009; Burns Institute, 2015) and clear evidence of a pipeline from school to California’s juvenile justice system exists. Data from the National Center on Juvenile Justice (2008) show Latino youth arrested for assault are more likely to be arrested during at noon, and that youth arrests peak immediately after school, from 3pm to 4pm (Arya, Villaruel, Villanueva & Augarten, 2009). Moreover, emerging trends show an increase in the disproportionate rates of student discipline between Whites and Latinos as they age (Losen & Skiba, 2010), especially in California’s ten largest school districts (Losen & Skiba, 2010), and there is growing concern that the disproportionality in student discipline outcomes is a result of “of conscious or

unconscious racial and gender biases at the school level” (Losen & Skiba, 2010, p.8).

Recent research about racial and gender bias at the school level suggests a need of further study at the point of administrative decision-making. Important to this understanding is how school administrator’s partnerships with SROs affect student discipline. The data show that the presence of an SRO increases student referrals to the police by 22% and that diverse schools rely on law enforcement more than predominately White schools (Torres and Stefkovich, 2009). The consequences for Latino youth are devastating. In 2009, the most recent year for which statistics are available, 116,515 Latino youth were arrested in California alone and more than 81% of the arrested Latino youth (94,562) were referred to the juvenile court system (Burns Institute, 2013; Hockenberry, 2014). By contrast 49,937 white youth were arrested and 46,058 were referred to juvenile court (Burns Institute, 2013). The causes of the disproportionality between white and Latino youth have been investigated by several studies. The most recent at the time of this writing was produced by the W. Haywood Burns Institute which surveyed 44 reporting states and found the difference in white and non-white detention rates could not be accounted for by criminal activity alone (2008), a phenomenon best explained by differential selection (Piquero, 2008).

Among the perspectives on differential selection and punishment, empirical support has been found for racial bias, including the aversive racism framework (Aberson & Eittlin, 2004), the implicit bias framework (Blair et al., 2013; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000), the white racial frame (Feagin, 2013), colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014), and the racial contract (Mills, 1997). Common to all of the racial bias paradigms is the rarity of public displays of overt racial hatred and bigotry in contemporary racial bias and the co-existence of covert racial antipathy. One of the most well-developed theories about the workings of racial bias is the aversive racism framework. The aversive racism framework characterizes Whites’ endorsement of egalitarian values and denial of personal prejudice in conflict with underlying and unconscious negative feelings and beliefs about racial and ethnic minorities (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Dovidio et al., 2002). In this paradigm: “Most White Americans experience themselves as good, moral and decent human beings who believe in equality and democracy. Thus, they find it

difficult to believe that they possess biased racial attitudes and may engage in behaviors that are discriminatory” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 275). When made aware of their behaviors, Whites who engage in aversive racism may deny racial bias, offer non-race based explanations for their behavior, become defensive, or pathologize the victim (Solorzano, Cejas & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007).

Though ethnic and racial minorities also engage in racial bias, it differs from White racial bias because ethnic and racial minorities often lack the political, social, and economic power to institutionalize their biases (Dovidio et al., 2002). Moreover, some biases may cause self-harm. Camara Jones (2000) highlights the deleterious effects of internalized racism: “*Internalized* racism is defined as acceptance by members of the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth. It is characterized by their not believing in others who look like them, and not believing in themselves” (p. 1213). Thus, ethnic and racial minorities may experience outgroup marginalization, and internalize the stigma, and then engage in intragroup marginalization of members of their same ethnic or racial group.

## Methods

The data for this case study are drawn from an ethnographic study of student discipline practices from 2011 to 2014 at Californiatown High School (CHS). For the purposes of this article, I draw primarily on data collected in the year of Galvan’s arrest. This data includes field notes from observations, interviews with AP Joaquin and SRO Smith, and de-identified student discipline and arrest data from the 2011-12 school year. The study draws on critical methodologies for both data collection and analysis to reveal the discourses, ideologies and practices of disproportionate student discipline. In particular, critical ethnography and critical discourse analysis (CDA) bring understandings of the “social relationships, processes, values, beliefs and desires” (Choukliari and Fairclough, 2001) that lead to the disproportionate discipline of Latino boys. These methodologies, when used together with the framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) interrogate the “culturally sanctioned beliefs” (Wellman, 1977) such as the ideologies of race, gender, and class that undergird the school policies and practices that create inequality. The field notes

were coded using Strauss's (1987) model). I looked for both examples and non-examples to ensure I captured recurring patterns (Merriam, 1998). I conducted a CDA of the interview data. In summary, the critical methodologies that inform this article include critical ethnography, CDA and CRT.

CHS is located Pelica, a community of mixed industrial, agricultural and service industries in California. The majority of the nearly 1600 students in grades 9 through 12 was formed by just two ethnic groups Latino (60.3%) and White (26.7%). According to state records, 52% of students received free lunch, 6.9% received special education services, and 37% were English learners (CDE, 2012). By contrast, the mostly monolingual staff of 80 teachers was 56% White, although 25% of respondents declined to state an ethnicity (CDE, 2012). They had a combined average of 11 years of teaching experience, with an average of nine years in the district. Just 13 teachers (16.25%) were in the first two years of service (CDE, 2012). Among the 2011-12 administrators, the principal was a seven-year district veteran, with more than fifteen years of service. She, like most of the teaching faculty, was white and monolingual. The three assistant principals were White, bi-racial Chinese and White, and Mexican. AP Joaquin was the only administrator who spoke fluent Spanish and the only male.

In the following pages, I examine a variety of participant narratives and connect them to the ideologies and practices of the disproportionate discipline of Latino boys in an answer to the following questions:

1. What are the narratives of difference at CHS?
2. How are these narratives used to justify Galvan's punishment?

I begin with an explanation of the adults' beliefs about student discipline. Next, I explain the discourses of Latino criminality and White innocence that inform their beliefs about specific groups of students. Third, I explain how the narratives, together with the various manifestations of racial bias contributed to Galvan's exclusion from CHS altogether. I close with a discussion of the implications of Galvan's case and research-based student discipline practices that challenge these dominant narratives.





## **Findings**

### **SRO Smith**

SRO Ethan Smith, who was White, was a former Marine who had followed his wife to California after the birth of their son. When they divorced, SRO Smith remained in California, unlike his own father, who had left after his parent's divorce. He became a police officer in a community close to where his ex-wife lived to be with his son. In a conversation about why he stayed, the negative effects of a missing parent figured largely:

SRO: That's huge. So. You know if I didn't do that then if you're not around and (claps hands together) you miss out on opportunity to raise 'em and

Mari: Yeah

SRO: good influe..you know it could've changed his whole future and where he might end up in a you know.

The clause "Where he might end up" alluded to SRO Smith's near legal trouble and anger after his parent's divorce and mother's remarriage. He had "buil[t] a wall up" against his stepfather's authority and was doing poorly in school. SRO Smith acknowledged that he narrowly escaped arrest and other legal troubles because of his stepfather's heavy-handed intervention:

"I was grounded for like whole summers. The only thing I could do was go..go to work. You know. So while my friends were up at the lake, you know, out boating, having fun, I was either home or working, SRO Smith explained" (Interview, August 2013).

SRO Smith seemed to believe that young people required adult intervention, including legal intervention, to encourage a change when they were headed in the wrong direction. In his own life the intervention from his stepfather, "provide[d] structure, caring" for him. "And you really appreciate it after you graduate and start your career and see that they actually made a change in you for the better," he explained (Interview August, 2013). Perhaps because of his

stepfather's positive influence, SRO Smith wanted to help Galvan make a similar life change:

“As an SRO I like going out and affecting and influencing the..the kids out there. Making a difference in them. Hopefully, making an influence to where by the time they're eighteen, twenty years old they're doing something within the..their lives” (Interview August 2014).

To his dismay, Galvan, however, did not respond to SRO Smith. “Nothing I say to him changes his attitude. He doesn't want out of the gang life” (Field Notes: 3/1/12).

### **AP Joaquin Escobar**

AP Joaquin Escobar was an experienced administrator who articulated a deep commitment to social justice. Before CHS, he had been the interim principal of a community school for incarcerated juveniles. He expressed concern for students of color who “had no chance to...redeem themselves...just flat out expulsion” as a result of strict zero tolerance policies (Field Notes 12/6/2011). My field notes from the conversation convey this concern:

“A lot of students have had bad experiences. One of my abilities is being able to recognize the factors that affect minority kids. I know personally and professionally the challenges of minorities, kids on the fringes. Some districts have a zero tolerance policy. They don't try to help you...tell you why...[A local school district] has zero tolerance. If they find a student with a significant amount of drugs or a knife, they immediately move to expel the person. I ask if he doesn't agree. With the zero tolerance policy? No, I don't...I have been on both sides. I worked with students who had no chance to redeem themselves, just flat out expulsion. Ninety percent of them were minorities. You start to notice the subtle white racism. In kid talk they're racist is what they say. Through lots of reading as well as my personal experience I can tell you the US has been able to get rid of discrimination on the books but institutionalized white racism is alive and well” (Field Notes 12/6/2011).

While AP Joaquin understood that deleterious effects of zero tolerance policies, his practices did not consistently reflect this understanding.

In an interview, AP Joaquin linked the disproportionate discipline of Latino boys to the use of English, and assimilation to American culture (interview June 2013). Non-Spanish-speaking Latinos, and Latino students who did not pronounce their last name in Spanish were “lost” without the Spanish language. “They are confused because of their identity and so they act out.” In response AP Joaquin was more “firm” which he described as “a culturally relevant discipline practice” (interview June 2013).

One of the groups of “lost” Latinos that AP Joaquin especially wanted to affect were suspected members of Latino gangs. He observed a group of Latino boys who gathered at the bathrooms during lunch and passing periods. He believed they were gang members who gathered at the bathrooms to “mark” their territory and intentionally “intimidate” other students. In an interview, AP Joaquin described the interventions he used to move the boys from the bathroom, an activity he called “mak[ing] it uncomfortable” (Interview 2014):

Mari: What do you do to make it uncomfortable?

Joa: Well, um we did the due process. We reminded them, give ‘em a number of reminders and then um we called in a number of students to the office and issued consequences and then those students directly or indirectly delivered the message of saying hey if we’re gonna continue doing this we’re going to face some serious consequences so it was one where we went as far as having a parent meeting and the student..and the student has never come back.

Mari: And what are the other consequences? Like a parent (meeting)

Joa: (Oh the tip..) typically a parent meeting. Ah..possible ah suspension, uh in school suspension, um Friday schools. Uh the..the progressive discipline consequences that we issue if they don’t comply so um

Mari: Did anybody get an in school suspension?

Joa: Yeah. Yeah.

Mari: Or a suspension.

Joa: I issued a couple of in school suspensions uh a couple of times.

Mari: Did anyone get um..get..did any one student get an in school suspension repeatedly? (Did a)

Joa: (No) but only one student did get a two day school suspension because of his history. Yeah.

Mari: Was..was it in school suspension or home suspension?

Joa: Oh no. It was in school because the whole idea is to keep ‘em in school and it’s also in the spirit of these um many of these students are also not very well connected, not and struggling a bit in school so we want to keep them in school but also want them to comply so it’s that fine balance.

AP Joaquin rationalized his surveillance as an anti-violence measure, explaining there had been fights near the bathrooms several years prior. In conversations with the staff I learned that the students he watched had not participated in the fights because they were in middle school at the time they occurred. Moreover, the fights had not occurred at the bathrooms, but rather in a field which was a great distance from the bathrooms. Finally, one of the students AP Joaquin believed was a member of a gang was known to me for his community service at a neighboring elementary school where I also conducted observations.

### **Latino Criminality**

Latinos were regularly associated with gangs and closely monitored. Although the administration and SRO agreed that CHS did not have any real gang members, they frequently discussed the gang

associations of Latino boys. During one observation, AP Ray, who is a White female, pointed out a group of mostly Latino boys:

“They would be reds...Some red..wannabes. Mostly red wannabes. A few reds..They go around and walk and circulate and kinda eye and posture...and um there’s been a lot of red stuff in the community and a couple of ‘em are kinda involved in that, too” (Field Notes: 3/4/2014).

Whereas AP Ray made explicit the link between Latinos, gang membership and gang activity in the community, SRO Smith carefully avoided naming race outright. In a discussion about service calls to a park near the school, he used euphemisms for race to both mark Latino ethnicity and link Latinos to gang membership, “You know and then you get the kids that are gang related. [They] try claiming a park as their territory and you know other people don’t want to come into the park now” (Interview 2014). Given the community narratives and demographics, the use of “gang related” when used with the clause “claiming a park as their territory” marked Latino students as gang members in this discussion. The description of corporate fear, “don’t want to come” linked Latinos to a practice of disruption that intimidated “other people” who were prevented from fully enjoying their community.

The narrative of gang membership and link to corporate fear served to justify the school’s heightened observance of Latino boys. In the school’s logic Latino gangs from the community were spilling into the school. In addition to AP Joaquin’s efforts, SRO Smith and Acting AP Lupe also focused on the the group of alleged Latino gang members who gathered at the bathroom. SRO Smith explained:

“Yeah. Yeah so you have let’s say for CHS for example around a certain bathroom on the southside of the school we used to have blue..you know the blue crew is usually affiliated with the Sureño gangs that would hang out in front of the one bathrooms. Um so we’d go over there you know during period..between periods, during lunch time, you know hey get over there...Scatter ‘em. Don’t let ‘em hang out in that area that they can uh kind of claim it as theirs you know” (Interview, August 2013).

Acting AP Lupe, who was Latina, surveilled the same group of boys, but acknowledged they weren’t all gang members. In a conversation about six alleged members of the Sureño gang, she

admitted that, “Just two of them,” were Sureños. A few minutes later she told me that the Norteños and Sureños played handball together. When I asked her if she thought that gang-affiliated boys would be willing to lay their differences aside for a hand-ball game, she explained, “it’s kinda weird” (Field Notes: 9/4/12).

The logic of Latinos’ criminality and need for surveillance seemed to extend to all Latinos. During one observation, Acting AP Lupe and I walked the campus at lunch. Small to large groups of students engaged in typical adolescent behavior. As we walked down a wide path between two buildings, AP Lupe explained she was looking at, “little groups like these” (Field Notes: 9/4/12). The group she identified was Latino. As she walked closer, Lupe narrated, “Something looks like it may be happening. I’ll just get closer.” My field notes show what I observed: “I point out a group of White boys on the left and ask about them. She points out another group of Latino males, this time by the bathroom” (Field Notes: 9/4/12). Although the Latino and White students were in the same area and seemed to behave in similar ways, Acting AP Lupe focused only on the Latino students. I noticed that the APs carefully observed groups of Latino boys but seemed to ignore Latina girls altogether. Mixed groups of Latino boys and White boys were similarly overlooked as were pairs of Latino boys, unless one member of the pair was an alleged gang member.

### **White Innocence**

White students did not often experience serious consequences, like suspension, expulsion, arrest or transfer. A possible explanation for their underrepresentation is parental advocacy. White parents were more likely to challenge student discipline consequences. The APs, however, did not always welcome parental advocacy, especially when Principal Kelly overturned a discipline decision on behalf of a parent. One such example involved AP Ray, Carter Dawson, a varsity baseball player, his mother, Tina Dawson, an officer with the gang task force, and CHS Principal Kelly. “That mom’s a bitch,” AP Ray told me one day after she spoke with Mrs. Dawson. Known for her quiet demeanor and persuasive way with parents, AP Ray was angry because the “very entitled” Carter and his girlfriend “took off” in his truck during his fifth period class. Campus Supervisor (CS) Valentino

had seen Carter leave and notified AP Ray. Carter's mother used her knowledge of legal evidence to challenge CS Valentino's identification, and argued that the video footage of him leaving the campus was not clear. Principal Kelly had agreed and dismissed the class cut and administrative consequence.

White students who misbehaved were more likely to be ignored and assigned less punitive consequences than non-White students. During an observation of a discipline conference between AP Ray and Ivan, a Latino student, Ivan described a scenario in which his White classmate, Ryan, received a different consequence for his misbehavior. Both boys took out their cell phones during class. The teacher told Ryan to put his phone away but attempted to confiscate Ivan's phone. When Ivan refused to turn in his phone on the grounds that Ryan's phone was not confiscated, Ivan was referred to the AP's office. When Ivan became upset, CS Graciela, a Latina campus supervisor, threatened to call the police. By the time AP Ray met with Ivan, he was sitting on a bench in the quad and had missed class. Ivan explained that had taken out his phone to look at the time since he could not read an analog clock.

The staff employed narratives of White goodness, caring, trustworthiness and innocence to explain the differential treatment White students received when they misbehaved. During one observation in late spring, I observed AP Ford, a White male, as he walked the campus at lunch. He ushered several students, who appeared to be Latinos, from off-limits areas behind the school. As we approached the bleachers in another off-limits area AP Ford walked by two White males. My field notes captured the scene:

“I noticed two white males sitting on the bleachers and asked about them, since he had previously stated students weren't allowed in the area. AP Ford admitted he hadn't seen the white males...As if to explain why they weren't in trouble, he explained, ‘They're both good kids’” (Field Notes 5/1/14).

Other staff members offered variations of AP Ford's explanation of White goodness. Mel, a White male campus supervisor, described a group of white boys as “students who listen” (Field Notes 5/10/12). Similarly, AP Ray downplayed the behavior of two White students who were sent out of class for misusing power tools as “horsing around” (Field Notes 3/6/14). During one



observation, Acting AP Lupe explained that when White students get in trouble “it’s really big to them” (Field Notes: 9/4/12).

Acting AP Lupe’s conjecture that getting in trouble is “really big” to White students was part of a larger discourse of racialized gender at the school that treated Latino students as future gangsters and Latinas, and White boys and girls as inhered with innocence and goodness. The misbehavior of Whites and Latinas was downgraded by virtue of their race or gender, if it was noticed at all. White and Latina students who disobeyed the rules, no matter the seriousness of the infraction, were not often perceived as being on the verge of criminality, like Latinos were. Because their misbehavior was seen as innocuous, Whites and Latina girls were more likely to be assigned an intervention to set them back on the good road from which they had temporarily wandered. When White and Latina female students were out of class or left campus without teacher permission, the staff frequently believed their explanations: “I’m going to get water” or “I’m going to the bathroom”. Sometimes the staff offered an explanation such as when CS Mel asked a female student who was out of class, “Bathroom?” Latino boys, by contrast, were asked where they were going, followed to the classroom or referred to a destination for tardy students. No one, besides the Latino boys, seemed to question the disparity in treatment. One White female student who benefitted from the disparate treatment explained, “It’s not bad discrimination because I’m a good student” (Field Notes: 5/7/12).

### **Discussion**

Adults at CHS had a sincere desire to impact student lives and they employed diverse narratives when expressing the kinds of impact they wanted to have. SRO Smith invoked the narrative of paternalism, the philosophy that his intervention would improve the welfare of another, when he described his desire to “[m]ak[e] a difference” for Pelica youth. A self-described “knuckle-head”, SRO Smith was grateful for his stepfather’s intervention. He had grown from an angry youth, failing classes and getting into trouble, to an officer of the law. In many ways he identified with the youth he served and was effective with some of them, but he was also unaware of his implicit biases against Latino boys which he employed when talking about the kinds of children he wanted to help.

### **Narrative: Latino Boys Grow Up to Be Gang Members**

In his well-intentioned description of “making a difference”, SRO Smith revealed his implicit bias against Latino boys, likely without any understanding that he was introducing race. He invoked coded narratives of racial difference and violence (Sureños, Norteño, gang, blue, southside, claim, territory) that connected Pelica’s Latino youth with the well-known cultural trope of the Latino gang member. These labels, having already been established in the popular imagination through the media, music and literature (Berg, 2002; Mora, 2011; Neal, 2013), do the work of meaning making without the speaker ever having to mention race. Bender explains: “Latina/o youth are assumed to be gang members who will eventually graduate from wielding spray-paint canisters to carrying knives and guns” (2003, p. 30). The narrative of the young Latino gang member served to implicate every young Latino as a potential criminal, and justify their disproportionate surveillance and punishment.

### **Narrative: White Students Are Mostly Good**

At CHS, the trope of the young Latino gangster co-existed with various narratives of the “goodness” of White students. According to this logic, White students generally obeyed adults, infrequently engaged in minor misbehavior, if they misbehaved at all, and cared deeply about getting in trouble. While staff did not explicitly define White students as inhered with goodness, a careful look at the students to whom the label or characteristics of goodness was assigned reveals that in each case, the student was White or dominant culture conforming. Morris’ (2005) study of a Texas middle school revealed similar findings:

“Adults rarely disciplined white girls or boys...educators typically interpreted white...boys as harmless and white girls as well mannered. “Whiteness”...although partially qualified by class-based performative display, appeared to indicate **docility** and **normative masculinity and femininity**. Educators assumed at the outset that white...students did not need disciplinary reform, which only solidified their

connection to educationally valuable forms of cultural capital in dress and manners” (p. 45)

My field notes of student discipline conversations, and disaggregated student discipline data from the 2011-12 school year indicate a substantial pattern of under-referral for White students and over-referral of Latino students to the office. The predominately White staff believed itself colorblind, and never mentioned race as a factor in student discipline decisions, even while clear patterns of racialized difference existed. The cell phone incident wherein the teacher ignored a White student’s phone use and confiscated a Latino boy’s phone; the AP’s blindness to the White boys who were on the bleachers while redirecting Latino boys from the area; and the offering of alibis to White students who were out of class without permission while following Latino boys to class, take on new meaning in light of the racial disproportionality in student discipline consequences. These seemingly isolated examples of educator discretion reveal a pattern of White privilege in student discipline and surveillance of Latino boys.

### **Narrative: Latino Gang Members Must Be Punished**

At CHS, the dual discourses of White innocence and Latino criminality impacted educators’ perceptions and treatment of Latino boys. The school operated a two-tiered student discipline system wherein staff invested in White and dominant culture conforming students who were considered “reachable”. By contrast, a significant number of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Latino males were discursively positioned as needing to be removed from the school for the sake of the “reachable” students, a process Pedro Noguera calls “sorting out the bad apples” (2003, p.344). An understanding of this context helps to clarify the factors that contributed to Galvan’s incarceration.

According to the district’s Sequential Discipline Plan, the school was required to suspend Galvan for up to five days for the fight, and the SRO was to determine the criminal consequences. SRO Smith explained his options: “[I can] give citations or cite and release to a parent for like misdemeanors and even some felonies um or you can take them to the hall and book them that way” (Interview: February, 2012).

Research shows that an officer's decision to arrest is mediated by subjective considerations such as the youth's race (Pillivan and Briar, 1964), gender (Allen, 2005; Conley, 1994; Morash, 1984), and the officer's perception of the youth's demeanor (Allen, 2005; Ludman, 1996), and that younger, less experienced officers, like SRO Smith, are more likely to arrest minority youth. Galvan embodied the arrest trifecta. He was a young, Latino male whose demeanor led SRO Smith to say that, "he doesn't believe Galvan will change or wants to get out, doesn't believe Galvan is listening" (Field Notes: 3/1/12). Moreover, Galvan relocated from Southern California, a geographical trope that SRO Smith associated with authentic Norteño gang membership. Because Galvan's arrest was not mandatory, it is likely that SRO Smith's decision was affected by a combination of his inexperience and youth, as well as his perception of Galvan's race, gender, and demeanor as fitting the profile of a gang member.

Gang identification is a notoriously subjective process and one that is inflected/influenced by racial bias, especially for Latino youth. Daniel Alarcon's investigation of the criminalization of minority youth reveals the extent of the inequities. White gang membership tends to be undercounted while Latino youth gang membership tends to be overestimated (Alarcon, 2015). The state-wide database of law enforcement identified gang members, CalGang, counts 200,000 individuals, 66% of whom are Latino, including some youth as young as ten years old (Alarcon, 2015). Manohar Raju, the manager of the felony unit at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office explained the perils of identifying youth as gang members, "Posing in a picture, acting cool or acting tough can be a navigation strategy..That may not mean they want problems; in fact, it may mean the opposite."

## **Conclusion**

The elimination of racial bias in adult decision-making is critical to ending the disproportionate involvement of Latino youth in the criminal justice system and understanding the discursive resources educators use to justify disproportionality is an important part of this process. I want to highlight three promising strategies that have been shown to reduce racial disproportionality in student discipline and punishment. Jennifer Eberhardt's research in the recognition of implicit bias has been shown to be effective with law enforcement

officers, and has practical applications for educators. The use of restorative practices as an alternative to suspension and incarceration has been well documented for cases involving a range of misbehaviors, including interpersonal violence (Shah, 2013; Hantzopoulos, 2011). Finally, the analysis of student discipline data can help identify inequities in student discipline, ranging from the demographic profiles of student groups who are under/over represented in exclusion to the types of explanations educators write in their ODR and the specific discipline practices that result in racial and gender inequities. While working with staff to overcome these biases and inequitable practices won't happen overnight, Eberhart's work proves that adults can learn to examine about their assumptions and change their hearts.

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# Pedagogical Implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

Vera Jacobson-Lundeberg

## Abstract

*This paper examines students' perceptions of how intentionally taught 21<sup>st</sup> century skills have transformed their lives. Personal development education (PDE) encompasses interpersonal and interaction skills that are required for students to function and succeed in global-oriented 21<sup>st</sup> century colleges and careers. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is a reform movement bringing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into the mainstream. Embedding 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as communication and collaboration is necessary and timely, meeting the requirements of the CCSS English-language art's listening and speaking standards. This paper explores students' perceptions of how PDE influenced their ability to communicate more effectively and work collaboratively with a range of peers and others. Therefore, as the value of this education is recognized, this paper also offers practical implementation and application strategies for core curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *Personal development education, soft skills, 21st century skills, common core standards, pedagogic implementation*

Inequitable student outcomes and a growing population of under- or mis-educated adults are predictable as long as our kindergarten through grade-12 (K-12) education retains its current structure (Rumberger & Lim 2008: *Career & Technical State Report*, 2008). One way to mitigate patterns of mis-education is through personal development education (PDE), an essential dimension of 21<sup>st</sup> century education designed to prepare lower-income and immigrant students to succeed in college and careers (California Department of Education CDE, 2006). This paper is the result of a research study that examined the effects of PDE on students' perceptions of growth, with particular

focus on and attention to potential benefits for socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) subgroups. The paper offers a pragmatic approach to teaching and learning framework that embeds career education in the school system, and it identifies factors that strengthen student career development (California Department of Education [CDE], 2006). This study sought to document the role of PDE through students' perceptions of 21<sup>st</sup> century behavioral skill development, and to report on whether such an education gives students multidirectional skills to navigate appropriately and successfully both in school and in their careers. The context of this study is a career and technical education (CTE) program that specifically includes PDE as a framework within which educational transformation for first-generation college attending students can take place.

Providing PDE to students in SED subgroups is a critical dimension of equitable education. According to Johnson (2008), "those born into economically advantaged families receive through rearing the instruments needed to appropriate the knowledge transmitted in schools and those lacking capital and the cultivation of the requisite cultural tools unfortunately depend on schools to cultivate these dispositions" (p. 231). "Proponents of neoclassical human capital perspectives hold that individuals who possess a higher level of achieved status receive better paying jobs because their achievements—signal—to employers that they are more able and therefore potentially more productive" (Sakura-Lemessy, Carter-Tellison, & Sakura-Lemessy, 2009, p. 408).

Twenty-first century skills can easily be taught and embedded into core curriculum. The author has taught these skills consistently in her courses for more than 20 years. She has created and conducted PDE workshops on embedding these skills into their individual pedagogical practice. Therefore, this paper discusses the value of teaching PDE, specifically 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of communication and collaboration. The methodology used to conduct this study and the resulting findings are discussed, followed by a discussion stemming from empirical knowledge of teaching the skills to students as well as a description of a Professional Development Workshop for teachers that embeds 21<sup>st</sup> century skills curriculum in core academic courses.

## The Value of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

This study focused on the role of PDE for disenfranchised students' success in both college and careers. Workforce development literature shows that they are necessary for students' success, both in college and careers, in a globalized, high-tech, knowledge-based world (Friedman, 2005; Schuman, Besterfield-Sacre, & McGourty, 2005; Trilling 2009). The literature supports the case for PDE, yet mainstream schooling has historically ignored these recommendations. Additionally, the newly adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) address PDE by adding six speaking and listening criteria to their literacy standards, making this study timely.

Within CTE, this research study focused on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for achieving success both in school and career. PDE is very broad, and the skills that fall into this education vary. The phrase *soft skills* mean those skills that do not fall into the technical domain. They are called "SCAN skills" by the U.S. Department of Labor (so named from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills ([SCANS], 1991 p. 5); "professional skills" by the American Board of Engineering and Technology ([ABET] Schuman et al., 2005); "Equipped for the Future—EFF Skills," (Equipped for the Future, 2009, p. 3); and "21<sup>st</sup> century skills" by the organization called Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (2003, overview page).

Soft skills can be defined as a cluster of personality traits; social graces; and facility with language, friendliness, and optimism (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007). According to Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (2003), these soft skills are defined as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Other definitions include communication skills, people skills, teamwork skills, demeanor, motivation, flexibility, initiative, work attitudes, and effort (Moss & Tilly, 1995). However these interpersonal skills are defined or named, the current workforce development literature states they are now recognized as necessary because of increasing demand for a broader skills set—especially among technical professionals—due to increasing global competition, and the search for new ways to increase productivity and profit (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007). Research shows that when employees have had PDE, companies gain a marketable edge in competition (Trilling 2009). Given that researchers have identified the critical role of PDE, educators must



explicitly teach these skills and evaluate whether and to what degree students have attained them.

According to Thomas Friedman (2005), we are currently in an era called “Globalization 3.0.” (p. 10). Due to rapid advances in technology, this era is unique because of the newfound power of individuals to collaborate and compete globally. Friedman has claimed that the power of the individual to work and survive by competing globally is enormous, and now the individual is required to work both alone and on a team performing complex tasks as knowledge workers. Americans will do well *if* they produce knowledge workers who create idea-based goods and can connect “knowledge pools” (p.10) all around the world. This work, then, demands high-tech skills (hard skills) as well as teaming, collaboration, and communication (soft) skills.

A team of researchers examining engineering education suggested that globalization has been driving changes in our economy, and therefore our educational practices (Schuman et al., 2005, p. 43). They identified four reasons for these changes: fast-paced information technology changes, corporate downsizing, outsourcing, and the new global work environment. Because of the new world economy and a growing group of overseas trained professionals willing to work for much less monetary compensation than the American workforce, the American educational system must not only provide hard skills but also value-added 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to justify a higher wage. To stay globally competitive, the U.S. work force must be excellent in both.

Empowering students with a new language and fluency in appropriate behavior for their own personal success and achievement is timely due to all the global changes and forces at work. Twenty-first century skills education is relevant for *all* students to succeed, both in a college setting and in the workplace and according to Mitchell, Skinner, and White (2010), “employers rate soft skills highest in importance for entry-level success in the workplace” (p. 44).

### **The Research Study**

This qualitative inquiry pursued understanding intentionally taught communication and collaboration skills and how this education

modified any and all aspects of the students' lives. In PDE literature, the students' voices and perspectives were missing, and therefore, the hope of this paper was to shed light on the significance of PDE as a relevant educational reform.

The context for the study was a program called Business United in Investing, Lending, and Developing, or BUILD, that was designed to provide both academic and personal skills for a specific population. This intervention program targets SED subgroups, beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teaching entrepreneurialism. In grades 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, it becomes an afterschool program teaching entrepreneurial and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as well as academic tutorial instruction with a strong college focus.

The researcher was granted an opportunity to observe this PDE program, gather students' voices and perceptions about PDE, and analyze the findings. The participants shared their stories of personal transformation through 24 informal interviews and four focus groups, which resulted in new knowledge. These new findings add to the existing knowledge surrounding 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The inquiry revolved around the students' perspectives of their own learning, what it means to them, and the impact of this new learning on their lives. The data revealed innovative thinking regarding the value, effect, outcomes, and issues surrounding PDE.

### **The Research Questions**

1. What changes have students experienced with 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies, namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking, or creativity? How have these changes influenced the students' personal, family, school, and/or community life?
2. How have the students comprehended, used realistically, and incorporated these skills into actual work habits?

### **Data Collection Tools**

The type of data needed for the paper included the following:

- Student interviews from three grade levels—sophomore, junior, senior
- Student data demographics

- Student observations
- Student written response journals

### **Findings: Communication, Collaboration, and Credibility**

This study focused on the role of communication and collaboration in self-empowerment and students' sense of their own credibility. Before this study, the researcher had a general idea that PDE was a way to empower youth, particularly SED populations. The researcher originally thought 21<sup>st</sup> century skills empowered students for their future career success. But the students' portrayal of their experiences illuminated the contribution of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to increasing confidence, self-efficacy, and credibility.

The overarching theme that permeates the findings from this paper is self-empowerment through PDE, specifically through learning communication and collaboration skills. While the literature recommending 21<sup>st</sup> century skills development was consistent in education, (Trilling 2009) the researcher had not anticipated the depth and breadth of the personal transformations the participants shared. The emergent findings are that (a) communication and collaboration are the gateway skills to the rest of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and participants perceive code-switching as an added-value skill for effective communication; (b) participants appreciate the art of collaboration, recognizing the challenges and successes inherent in people management and interpersonal relationships; and (c) participants believe their credibility is increased as an outcome of learning effective communication techniques.

#### **Communication**

One key finding was that communication is a gateway skill to other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Communication skills lead into the more sophisticated, complicated soft skills of critical thinking, problem solving, stress management, and risk taking. Communication is powerful: language holds immense power in the development of successful human relations. In fact, effective communication's real purpose is to relay information successfully from one person to another. Freire (1993) stated that the oppressed must fight for their own liberation; through effective communication, this liberation can

be a reality. According to Stewart (1990), “the quality of your life is directly linked to the quality of your communication” (p. 6). All 13 participants knew the value of effective communication and that language and communication are keys to their success in life. The participants recognized the value of effective communication by expressing their ability to discern the communication skill set needed for a given situation in a sophisticated way. Their awareness of the “other”—the audience—is essential to their ability to communicate. Likewise, participants voiced their concerns about wanting to hear and *be heard*, to know and *be known*, and to understand and *be understood*.

The way the participants are understood is through their ability to code-switch, which was defined by O’Neal and Ringler (2010) as “a strategy that helps us communicate in socially and culturally appropriate ways” (p. 50). Therefore, it is safe to say that code-switching is a skill with which one can change words and/or behaviors to effectively communicate and obtain a desired goal. They believe that without these skills, newly hired employees have only a small chance of success in their field of employment. The data showed a strong awareness of informal or formal language and the need to discern when to code-switch; most participants valued code-switching as part of their communication successes and demonstrated belief in their ability to use it appropriately.

Discerning what type of language to use in particular situations and when to use it is a sophisticated judgment skill expressed in participant responses. The participants realized the value of code-switching for effective communication, noting that personal communication is comfortable when one has built-in trust with the other. Formal communication is another mode of speaking or writing that relies on one’s ability to discern which language to use, and, as Sienna described, “Just [use] normal English.” The participants stated that formal language is limited and specific, whereas informal language has no boundaries. They also noted that sometimes the two forms overlap, forming a gray area. Sienna added, “It’s less formal, but in a way, it’s still formal.”

Simply stated, the execution of effective communication requires the sender to access formal communication skills so the receiver can fully comprehend the message. When the receiver fully

understands the message and believes it, the communication is deemed successful—which establishes the credibility of the sender.

### **The Art of Collaboration: The Need to Communicate in Order to Collaborate**

A second finding relates to the art of collaboration. Some participants demonstrated strong views on the subject of collaboration. Collaboration is also a gateway skill because producing work with others is a highly challenging skill to acquire. If communication and collaboration skills can empower marginalized populations and strengthen their sense of self, these skills also can help people be open and therefore vulnerable, ultimately achieving successful human relations. Personal sacrifice was a strategy spoken of many times in the current study, in terms of a complex tension between what they individually sacrificed for the team and what they could hold on to.

Interestingly, the participants shared stories about experiences that were not successful, but that revealed keen insight about interpersonal conflicts. Some ignored other teammates, some set boundaries and held firm to them, while still others threatened their teammates. The participants concluded that sometimes people have sad lives, and their responses revealed a heightened sense of empathy, allowing them to give personal space and extra time for their teammates to accomplish the work.

Maria shared a personal, painful story of economic hard times as she almost became homeless. People called her terrible names like “toad.” She remained strong and said, “People don’t know when they judge, and they may hurt someone’s feelings.” They are learning to manage people by adapting to situations, events, as well as each other. Teamwork depends on team members’ cooperation. I believe they are not victims of their marginalized background but rather warriors in overcoming their hardships that can serve them well in life—both in school and in their careers.

### **Credibility**

Credibility as an outcome of effective communication was the third finding. Communicating successfully results in credibility, which in turn empowers the individual (Freire 1993). For example, Bobby

showed the importance of credibility by saying, “I’ve been able to present my ideas in a way to make them easily understood and to get to my point faster.” Communicating clearly and concisely is key to building trust; sending a message needs to be done correctly to have the receiver believe the sender is credible. Participants described the value of credibility throughout our interviews; however, the literature reviewed did not directly address the importance of credibility as vital in building self-efficacy.

Twenty-first century skills of communication and collaboration lead to empowerment through the attainment of credibility. Freire (1993) taught that to liberate oppressed populations permanently, education must actively engage them in dialogue to create action to enable them to access their own power. Participants needed their ideas, thoughts, and opinions valued; therefore, they are valued. The participants want to feel worthy, not worthless. According to Freire, the term *marginalized* refers to lack of access to power. Therefore, effective communication is a tool to access power, and the participants valued this tool as they learned to use it. For example, Bobby spoke about his growth: he used to just say what he thought, hoping everybody else would agree, but he would not argue or defend his point if they did not. Since receiving this education, he has gained effective communication skills, so he can stand his ground, insisting on his argument or his idea.

The theme of credibility surfaced again with a wider scope of influence as Ronesha spoke of her community members as dispirited and not believing in themselves. This statement supports the value of credibility with the participants and how vitally important it is to be believed. When students learn to communicate effectively, they have a better chance of being believed, leading them to believe in themselves. As Ronesha said, “It’s just like they’re closed to different opportunities that they actually have.”

### **Synthesis of Communication, Collaboration, and Credibility**

Twenty-first century skills build social intelligence (Goleman 2006), which is defined as intelligence with human relationships (Goleman, 2006). Freire (1993) explained that when people are oppressed or not given adequate education, they become stifled. These 21<sup>st</sup> century behavioral competencies are a key to unlocking the power all people

have; this is especially important in marginalized populations who have been oppressed and silenced. These skills can help all populations access their own power, in a dignified manner, and use it to their advantage.

As Maria pointed out, these are “survival” skills within a 21<sup>st</sup> century context. Ronesha spoke of the defeated spirit within her own community, believing that if they only knew these skills, people in her community could transform their thinking. Raj told us of the new reality of cyberspace, where people communicate and connect digitally, forming relationships and working together. Participants spoke of self-empowerment and how 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are a tool enabling them to access their own power. They described how they used these skills in all areas of their lives, including church, school, family, and friend relationships, as well as in navigating power relationships. They have a keen sense of using these skills to speak to power, so they too can access such power for their personal use.

After conducting this research, the researcher realized that PDE plays an essential role in students’ lives beyond employability skills. PDE contributes to human empowerment by teaching students how to access the power that lies within them. It is a higher-level, transformative education. Ronesha clearly articulated the immense need for this kind of education in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods where people have given in to the spirit of poverty: “Our town is low income and a lot of people don’t believe—a lot of people don’t have that motivation to succeed. . . . They don’t believe in themselves. . . . ‘School is whack; I’m just going go hang out with my homies.’” PDE can transform people—and through those people, transform their communities—by empowering them with their own creativity, critical thinking, and ability to achieve dignified interpersonal conflict resolutions. The reach of PDE is wider than thought.

### **Implications for Educational Reform**

Providing PDE to students, particularly in SED subgroups, is a critical dimension of equitable education. The report *Pathways to Prosperity—Meeting the Challenges of Preparing Young Americans for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011) specifically speaks to the necessity for soft-skills education:

[H]ard and soft skills are essential for success in this economy. . . .These findings strongly suggest that a more holistic approach to education—one that aims to equip young adults with a broader range of skills—is more likely to produce youth who will succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (p. 4).

California adopted CCSS for both English and math. CCSS are designed to prepare every student for success in college and the workforce. These standards are designed to ensure that students can compete globally in the new world order. The language standards include not only elements of reading and writing but also speaking and listening. This is a shift in thinking, bringing an increased awareness to the value of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, which makes this study timely. Through California’s adoption of the CCSS, students learn to express ideas, work together, and listen carefully to integrate and evaluate information (California Department of Education, 2010).

Education needs to be separated into three equal domains. ConnectEd (2012), for example, built a conceptual framework identifying academic, career, and 21<sup>st</sup> century domains. Similarly, the researcher contends that education needs restructuring into three equal domains for educating the student as an individual and not as an object. This vision would include academic education, career and technical education and personal development education (PDE). Such a three-part structure would support greater educational equity, policy changes, and program development. The researcher envisions that these three domains of education be embedded into the existing kindergarten through grade-12 curriculum, rather than separating them into individual components. This integrated approach would be articulated as instructional modalities throughout the current academic system.

### **Pedagogic Implementation**

Understanding the value and the need for PDE is just the beginning. As with any educational reform movement, the challenge is bringing it to the classroom. Implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be exercised and executed as one would any academic curriculum. The curriculum project entitled “C+C=S: Why Is It so Hard to Communicate: A Student-Created Research Project” is an example. This section includes a summary of the curriculum and of a PDE workshop for teachers taught by the researcher.





## The C+C=S Curriculum

The methods used to teach 21<sup>st</sup> century skills included direct instruction, interactive lecture, demonstration, modeling, discussion, simulation, journal writing, questioning, interviewing, project-based learning, cooperative learning, and reflection. Other methods included using objective quizzes and tests, reflective essay writing assignments, questionnaires, rubrics, and observations. This curriculum unit was taught in daily in seven 50-minute class periods. It was taught in a personal finance class, but could be taught in any academic class.

Students were first taught a working vocabulary of communication and collaboration terms, and their knowledge was assessed. Then, in teams, students conducted 2 days of field research, observing nonverbal communication and ineffective communication strategies. They made 20 observations in a public place, and recorded five different effective or ineffective communication scenarios. They then shared and synthesized their findings within their teams, identifying correct and incorrect way people communicate. The project culminated in the opportunity to practice formal oral presentation communication skills using PowerPoint to share findings with the class. A written reflective essay was also part of the end product.

Overall, this unit was successful, as evidenced by the students' reflective essays, in which they commented on their individual learning experiences. Remarks included the following:

- “If people weren’t able to communicate with each other, then society would break down. One of the main problems with communication is that it’s not always received and understood.”
- “A big part of eye contact is building trust. A person with whom you’re talking will be more likely to trust and respect you because eye contact indicates openness in communication.”
- “Smart phones are the by far the largest and most tempting distraction that we have today. They are easily accessible and they are so tempting to pull out of our pockets and they eventually take us completely away from a conversation at hand.”

- “Know that being a good listener is vital to your success in the future.”

In sum, this project was met with a high level of success. Ideally, this unit should be taught at the beginning of an academic year so the communication and collaboration vocabulary, skills and techniques can be reinforced throughout the course. PDE can be implemented in mainstream academic curriculum focusing on teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, thereby changing students’ behaviors and ensuring success in their careers and their personal lives.

### **Professional Development Workshop**

The workshop the researcher created and conducted was entitled Teaching Students the Communication and Collaboration Skills That Make Them Successful in the Classroom and Beyond. The researcher understood that the authority and ultimately the control of student-learning lie with teacher. Therefore, educating teachers on new strategies requires the facilitator to draw from the teachers’ professional expertise and input in order for effective curriculum design. Datnow (2005) suggested that most reforms are externally driven; therefore, leaders must be aware of the distinction between mandating change and supporting change. They must allow for decision-making time, increase information needed to enact the change, and bolster teacher involvement. If they really want to change classroom effectiveness, astute educational leaders must acknowledge that teachers hold the majority of the power to enact the reform. A change-agent school leader recognizes that power lies within the teacher and that empowering the constituents will ensure sustainable reforms system wide, such as teaching students new curriculum. Embedding 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into a teacher’s curriculum is based on concrete strategies such as vocabulary terms, readings, and quizzes, as well as acknowledging the individual teacher’s pedagogical style and specific content.

This 90-minute workshop was offered to various subject-area high school teachers. It was structured in three parts. The first segment taught the definition and value of PDE, specifically the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of communication and collaboration. Secondly, the teachers were taught concrete communication skills for the classroom. A communication process was taught that broke down each step of

communication into small pieces so learners could understand the complexity and have a concrete, specific, new way of teaching effective communication. Stewart (1973) stated, “It is more accurate to view communication as an interaction, as a process of reciprocal influence” (p. 20). Lastly, the workshop dealt with collaboration skills. New vocabulary concepts and terms were introduced demystifying the notion that these concepts are difficult to teach

Most of the teachers stated they would begin their fall semester with this type of instruction to ensure students’ success with communication and collaboration skills and strategies throughout the school year. One teacher planned to incorporate the following: “communication, collaboration, and creating synergy with students and between students; how to listen and offer feedback more effectively, solidifying understanding of basic, essential terms, such as decoding, interference, context, and proxemics.”

### **Recommendations**

Recognition of the value of PDE is just beginning to take hold in the United States, along with placing a higher value on holistic education for youth. The current study highlights the role of PDE in bringing this authentic reform to education. The following are my recommendations.

**Strengthen teacher training programs.** A course called 21<sup>st</sup> Century Behavior Studies for the Classroom is recommended for new teachers. New teachers would be instructed in practical implementation of behavioral 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies in their classroom. Or PDE could be embedded into teacher training curriculum. Not only would this help new teachers with classroom management, but it would prepare students for achievement in all areas of their life, including college and career.

**Provide PDE workshops for teachers.** The author created and conducted 21<sup>st</sup> century skills workshops for teachers. This could be an ongoing series managed through school districts or county offices of education. The vision is to conduct an ongoing series of workshops, teaching practical instructional strategies, starting with communication and collaboration skills. A survey of teachers and administrators could identify specific skills needed for local educational needs.

## Final Thoughts

This work is about power—who has it, who does not, who wants it, and how to access it. PDE is sophisticated education centering on human empowerment that teaches students how to access the power that lies within them. While this paper is about power, it is also about basic human dignity. Dignity is the quality or state of deserving respect. All people deserve dignity, but without effective communication skills—and without having a voice or being heard or understood—dignified treatment rarely occurs. Simply stated, teaching effective communication and collaboration skills leads to student self-empowerment, which produces an expectation of dignified treatment. Self-empowered people expect to be treated with dignity; they demand it. Therefore, it is in their expectation that they receive it. Conversely, when people are oppressed or disempowered, they do not expect to be treated with dignity and thereby do not receive it.

Empowering SED populations to unlock their own potential for greatness was one motivation for this project. The participants eagerly shared their stories of growth, challenges, and changes while experiencing PDE. The education system can further empower SED students by embedding the core curriculum of K-12 institutions with three types of education: academic, career and technical and personal development. Embedding 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into the curriculum is easily adaptable to any subject or teachers' style. The key strategies include:

1. Design curriculum based on concrete strategies (e.g., vocabulary terms, quizzes, and reflective writing)
2. Acknowledge and respect teachers' individual pedagogical practices. They know their student population, specific content and own teaching style. Therefore, flexibility and adaptability are paramount in teaching educators new curriculum design.
3. Ensure educators receive knowledgeable training by supporting ongoing PDE. For effective curriculum design, workshops can be offered teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. PDE teaches students how to access their own power and experience human dignity.

Students learn to speak with confidence and credibility. In turn, they can influence their families, friends, and communities, thereby working to create a more inclusive, diverse middle class in

the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The links between education, individual students, and their communities are evident in the voice of Ronesha, as she speaks her truth: “For me, it’s necessary to be teaching [21<sup>st</sup> century skills] in school because where I come from, it’s, like, it’s different because—well, not different—but most people aren’t exposed to these types of good skills that they should be having.”

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# “Racing to the Top” to Prepare Turnaround Principals in North Carolina: Homegrown Regional Leadership Academies

Kathleen M. Brown

## Abstract

*North Carolina’s Race to the Top (RttT) grant earmarked approximately \$17.5 million to “increase the number of principals qualified to lead transformational change in low-performing schools in both rural and urban areas” (NCDPI, 2010, p.10). To accomplish this, the state established three Regional Leadership Academies (RLAs) “approved for certifying principals [and] designed to . . . provide a new model for the preparation, early career support, and continuous professional development of school leaders” (NCDPI, 2010, p.10). This article describes the independent evaluation of this initiative including the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and expenditure processes associated with each RLA.*

**Key Terms:** *Principal Preparation, Turnaround Principals, Race-to-the-Top Initiative, Alternative Licensure Programs, Evaluation*

Developing school leaders who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to effectively lead and turnaround low-performing schools has become a critical goal for local education agencies (LEAs) intent on dramatically improving student outcomes. Four years ago the state of North Carolina was awarded one of only twelve federal Race to the Top (RttT) competitive grants, bringing nearly \$400 million to the state's public school system. Approximately \$17.5 million of these funds were specifically earmarked to “increase the number of principals qualified to lead transformational change in low-performing schools in both rural and urban areas” (NCDPI, 2010, p.10). To accomplish this in North Carolina, the state established three Regional Leadership Academies (RLAs), each of which laid out a clear set of principles about

leadership in general, leadership development in particular, and leadership development for high-need schools most specifically. The RLA programs were “approved for certifying principals [and] designed to . . . provide a new model for the preparation, early career support, and continuous professional development of school leaders” (NCDPI, 2010, p.10).

As such, the policy objective undertaken via North Carolina’s RLAs was to recruit and prepare over 180 “turnaround principals” serving more than 30 of the 100 counties across the state. The RLAs were created independently to meet the school leadership needs of three vastly different and very distinct regions of North Carolina (including “large, urban” and “small, rural”); thus, each RLA developed a unique program with its own partnerships, program philosophy, curriculum, coursework, and fieldwork.

One RLA (Northeast Leadership Academy, or NELA) was established one year before RttT funding was available to serve as a pilot program, and two others (Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy [PTLA] and Sandhills Leadership Academy [SLA]) were created following a selection process that included proposal submission to a selection committee composed of North Carolina educational leaders. The NC RttT RLAs serve collaboratives of partnering local education agencies (LEAs) and directly address the need to recruit, prepare, and support leaders of transformational change in challenging school contexts. This approach aligns with Orr, King, and LaPointe’s (2010) research that the most comprehensive and sustainable programs are collaborations that result in the development of customized programs that met district needs by design—from start to finish.

The RLAs provide talented individuals with the tools they need to lead high-need schools. Following a rigorous selection process, they provide full-time internships, contextualized leader development opportunities, intensive coaching, and ongoing support. The RLAs are designed to be consistent with literature on executive development, adult learning theory, and educational leadership (e.g., Brown, 2006; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; New Leaders for New Schools, 2009). The program meets North Carolina regulations regarding alternative principal licensure. See Appendix A for a fuller description of each RLA.



## Leadership Preparation

The importance of strong school leadership, particularly in low-achieving schools, has long been recognized by researchers and practitioners alike. As Crawford (1998) noted and others have substantiated (Grissom, 2011; Ouchi, 2009; Portin, Knapp, Dareff, Feldman, Russell, Samuelson, & Yeh, 2009), “Almost all educational reform reports have come to the conclusion that the nation cannot attain excellence in education without effective school leadership” (p. 8). And yet, the majority of school districts nationwide have found it difficult to recruit and retain school principals (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006). As Hess and Kelly (2005) so aptly explained: “School principals are the front-line managers, the small business executives, the battlefield commanders charged with leading their team to new levels of effectiveness. In this new era of accountability, where school leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results and use data to drive decisions, the skill and knowledge of principals matter more than ever” (p. 1). Hess and Kelly also concluded that “school improvement rests to an unprecedented degree on the quality of school leadership,” (p. 1) even though, Duke, Grogan, Tucker, and Heinecke (2003) pointed out that “leadership during this age of accountability has become more stressful, more political, more complex, and more time-consuming” (p. 212).

Understandably, policymakers have become increasingly concerned about a pending shortage of qualified individuals to fill principal positions in the nation’s schools (Gates, Ringel, & Santibanez, 2003), especially in the very schools most in need of outstanding leadership (i.e., schools with higher concentrations of poor and minority students, low per-pupil expenditures, low student test scores, and low principal salaries). In North Carolina, McFarland and Preston (2010) reported that, on average, “turnaround schools had significantly lower performance composites and graduation rates, and slightly lower percentages of teachers with full licensure than typical high schools. Suspension rates, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and the percentages of non-white students were all significantly higher in turnaround schools” (p.2). These conditions create challenges for school districts when they attempt to recruit and retain principals and teachers who will accept offers and

remain long enough to make a difference in student learning outcomes.

At the same time, an array of scholars have asked whether traditional approaches to preparing and licensing such principals are sufficient (Elmore, 2000; Fordham Foundation, 2003; Murphy, 2001; Tucker, 2003). To this point, Knapp and his colleagues found that conventional leadership preparation programs have not attracted enough high-quality candidates to work in high-poverty, low-performing schools, which are traditionally the schools that are the hardest to staff (Knapp, Copeland & Talbert, 2003). Likewise, Darling-Hammond and her colleagues asserted that recruiting committed candidates and comprehensively preparing them for the unique realities of leading in challenging contexts are keys to stabilizing principal turnover in addition to fostering high-quality teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, Lapointe & Orr, 2010).

As a result, a premise of innovative, alternative models like North Carolina's Regional Leadership Academies is that preparing individuals to become effective school leaders in high-need schools requires much more than traditional pre-service training, licensure, and placement. Rather, the making of an effective turnaround leader is an intricate process of learning and reflection, socialization into a new collaborative community of practice, and assumption of a new role identity that assumes responsibility for and assures learning for all students (Crow & Glascock, 1995; Daresh, 2002). Unique circumstances warrant specialized contextual knowledge and unique dispositions on the part of the leader to move schools from negative trajectories to positive ones. Through deliberate and strategic partnerships, leadership educators and practitioners can work together to develop curriculum, deliver instruction, and oversee field-based clinical practice and internships that provide the foundation for active-learning, job-embedded experiences aligned to the goal.

The conceptual framework for NC's model was developed from research literature and recommendations from reports on how to improve the preparation of school leaders. This research suggests that certain practices in leadership preparation should produce higher quality school leaders. Accordingly, programs yield more highly effective leadership graduates when they utilize: (a) research-based content that clearly focuses on instruction, change management, and

organizational practice, (b) coherent curriculum that links all aspects of the preparation experience around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective organizational practice, (c) rigorous selection process that gives priority to under-served groups, particularly racial/ethnic minorities, (d) cohort structures that foster collaborative learning and support, (e) school-university collaborations that create a seamless and coherent program for students, (f) field-based internships that allow individuals to apply their new knowledge and skills while under the guidance of expert leaders, (g) supportive organizational structures that support student retention, engagement, and placement, (h) systematic process for evaluating and improving programs and coursework, (i) low student-faculty ratio (i.e., 20-1) and active, student-centered instruction, (j) faculty members who make significant efforts to identify, develop, and promote relevant knowledge focused on the essential problems of schooling, leadership and administrative practice, and (k) on-going professional growth opportunities (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2007; Jackson & Kelly, 2002; Levine, 2006; Orr, 2007). In essence, developing effective principals entails continuing beyond completion of pre-service preparation programs, placement as school leaders, and support during novice practice years (Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005; Daresh, 2002).

### **Methods**

North Carolina's RttT proposal included a commitment to an independent evaluation of each initiative. The roles of the RttT Evaluation Team were to (1) document the activities of the RttT initiatives; (2) provide timely, formative data, analyses, and recommendations to help the initiative teams improve their ongoing work; and (3) provide summative evaluation results toward the end of the grant period to determine whether the RttT initiatives met their goals and to inform future policy and program decisions to sustain, modify, or discontinue initiatives after the grant-funded period.

This evaluation was informed by a variety of data sources, including document reviews, observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys, accounting data, and administrative data. Each RLA followed its own path to implementation, and evaluators were engaged in collecting and analyzing data related to that process since

March 2011. The following evaluation questions guided the evaluation of the NC RttT RLAs:

1. Do RLAs effectively recruit relative to the alternatives?
2. Do RLAs effectively select relative to the alternatives?
3. Do RLAs effectively train relative to the alternatives?
4. Do RLAs effectively place graduates in targeted schools/districts?
5. Are RLAs cost-effective relative to the alternatives?

### **Administrative Data**

In an effort to describe the characteristics of RLA internships and job placements, the evaluators obtained school-level administrative data from a longitudinal database maintained by the Carolina Institute for Public Policy (CIPP) and assembled from NCDPI administrative records. These data include school characteristics—school level (elementary, middle, or high), type (traditional or charter), region, and locale classification (i.e., urbanicity)—as well as demographic characteristics of the student population (free or reduced-price lunch, race/ethnicity, students with disabilities, and English language learners).

### **Survey**

Evaluators designed a biannual participant survey describing actions and traits that are specific, evidence-based recommendations for quickly and dramatically improving student achievement in high-need, low-performing schools (Papa & English, 2011). The purpose of this survey, administered each December and June, was to track RLA participants' level of exposure to, experience with, and development of the following key elements via their Leadership Academy: 1) Self-efficacy and optimism (i.e., rejection of status quo-failure, acceptance of responsibility), 2) Open-mindedness and pragmatism (i.e., contextual knowledge and adaptation, ability to apply theory to practice), 3) Resiliency and energy (i.e., persistent determination to improve student learning), and 4) Competence and skill sets (i.e., instructional leadership that builds rapport and capacity, knowledge of literacy, change processes, and human

motivation). The response rate from 189 participants was close to 90%.

### **Observations**

Evaluators observed each RLA's selection processes and candidate cohort experiences, including internships and mentoring/coaching efforts. These activities helped evaluators understand the support and guidance provided to each RLA participant. Evaluators conducted a total of 89 formal RLA observations (for over 240 hours) and attended and/or presented at 28 formal RLA meetings between March 2011 and March 2014. The goal of the evaluation was to visit each RLA at least once a month and to observe a variety of activities (e.g., site visits, guest panels, specialized trainings, weekly content seminars, Advisory Board meetings, mentor principal meetings, LEA selection processes, induction support sessions, conference presentations, etc.).

### **Interviews**

Between March 2011 and March 2014, evaluators interacted with and interviewed the RLA Directors, Executive Coaches, and the majority of participants from each RLA ( $n=200+$ ) several times. Evaluators also interviewed a random, convenience-sampled selection of mentor principals and participant supervisors from each RLA during this same timeframe. Formal and informal conversations occurred during every formal observation and meeting ( $n=110+$ ). Likewise, information was gathered daily via phone calls, emails, and listserv updates. A standardized format was not used for these discussions. Instead, open-ended questions were the norm. Most conversations were related to either how the RLA was progressing overall and/or specifically how the exercise at hand related to the participants' preparation to be leaders in high-need schools. Detailed notes were recorded and analyzed after each exchange. These activities helped evaluators gather a wide range of perspectives on the RLAs for qualitative analyses.

Creswell's (2009) mixed-methods approach was most appropriate for this evaluation, given the multiple data collection methods and mixed modes of analysis. Evaluators analyzed each RLA's recruitment and selection efforts, curricular and pedagogical



techniques, induction and support strategies, and RLA internal evaluation methods. Artifacts (planning documents, presentations, dissemination materials, curriculum plans, scopes and sequences, websites, news articles, etc.) and observational data were analyzed using relevant qualitative methodologies and computer software when appropriate. These activities helped evaluators understand how candidates were recruited, selected, trained, placed and inducted.

## **Findings**

### **Research Question 1: Do RLAs Effectively Recruit Relative to the Alternatives?**

Yes, the RLAs do effectively recruit relative to the alternatives. They have each engaged in careful recruitment processes to ensure that program participants have the expertise, commitment, and dispositions to serve as transformational school leaders. Each RLA has worked together with its partner LEA leaders to identify and recruit individuals who, in their judgment, are deeply committed to improving low-achieving schools and who are willing to make multiyear, post-academy commitments to work in said schools and LEAs.

In line with widely recognized alternative principal preparation programs (e.g., New Leaders for New Schools and New York City Leadership Academy) each RLA employs a plan for the deliberate, aggressive recruitment of outstanding school leadership candidates. A team of RttT grant-funded Executive Directors and Coaches, in conjunction with LEA members, developed and conducted broad-based recruitment and selective admissions processes that have resulted in the identification and selection of RLA participants who present demonstrable leadership skills and personal academic excellence. Table 1 provides a comparative overview of criteria used by each RLA, by alternative preparation programs, and by traditional Master's in School Administration (MSA) programs in North Carolina to recruit candidates into their individual pre-service leadership programs.

Table 1  
*RLA Recruitment Criteria in Comparison to Other Leadership Preparation Programs*

<b>Recruitment Criteria</b>	<b>NE LA</b>	<b>PT LA</b>	<b>S LA</b>	<b>Other Alternative Prep Programs (e.g., NYCLA, NLNS)</b>	<b>NC Traditional MSA</b>
1. Established reputation (i.e., known entity, word of mouth, graduates, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Brochures and informational materials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
3. "Tapping" process in LEAs in which people are encouraged to apply	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
4. Website information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Email blasts and LEA updates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
6. Local, state and national presentations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
7. Newspaper accounts, media coverage and various public relations press releases throughout the year (including promotional videos)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
8. Collaboration with partnering LEAs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
9. LEA based information sessions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
10. Superintendent endorsement	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
11. Superintendent meeting updates	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
12. School Board presentations	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
13. Partnerships with organizations (e.g., NC Education Consortiums, Teach For America, Historically Black Colleges/Universities, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
14. Commitment (initially and ongoing) to changing, improving, and transforming schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
15. Willingness to make multi-year, post-academy commitment	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	^ (PFs <sup>+</sup> )

*Note.* ^=The extent to which certain programs do and/or do not implement these recruitment criteria varies widely from none (i.e., not at all) to some.

<sup>+</sup>PF=North Carolina Principal Fellows agree to a 4-year leadership commitment post-graduation.

The RLA process of intentionally identifying and recruiting outstanding candidates (i.e., experienced teachers with strong teaching and leadership skills who are committed to educational

change) benefitted from strategic exposure tactics and publicity campaigns in partnering LEAs. As a result of these efforts, a large number of people expressed interest and completed the application process over the past three years (n=962). Overall, the recruitment and advertisement efforts for each RLA have been good and the RLAs have yielded a fairly high number of applicants (whether of sufficient high quality and quantity to fill necessary slots in the schools is yet to be determined).

### **Research Question 2: Do RLAs Effectively Select Relative to the Alternatives?**

**Selectivity.** The selection process of each RLA yielded fairly selective and competitive acceptance rates (189 participants selected from a total of 962 applicants. See Table 2). The RLA's overall acceptance rate of less than 20% is comparable to nationally recognized programs such as NYCLA (15%) and NLNS (7%). It is also much lower than traditional MSA programs in North Carolina, some of which have few applicants (less than 25 applicants for 20 slots) and/or report high acceptance rates (75% or higher). The Principal Fellows Program in North Carolina (NC PFP) had an acceptance rate of 56% in 2011 (60 recipients from 107 applicants), an acceptance rate of 72% in 2012 (56 recipients from 78 applicants), and an acceptance rate of 60% in 2013 (33 recipients from 55 applicants). The average acceptance rate for the NC PFP over the past three years has been 63%. In fairness to all of these programs, a larger number of potential participants do inquire, but after asking about minimum requirements (e.g., tuition costs, prior teaching experience, undergraduate GPA, etc.), decide not to formally apply. Unfortunately, there is not a valid way of tracking such numbers. Note that, aside from "opportunity costs," the RLA experience is completely free to participants.

Table 2  
*Number of RLA Participants Accepted Versus Number of Candidates who Applied*

<b>RLA</b>	<b>2011–12 Cohort 1 Acceptance Rate</b>	<b>2012–13 Cohort 2 Acceptance Rate</b>	<b>2013–14 Cohort 3 Acceptance Rate</b>
NELA	24/38 = 63%*	21/41 = 51%	20/28 = 71%*
PTLA	21/173 = 12%	20/169 = 12%	22/197 = 11%
SLA	20/110 = 18%	21/79 = 27%	20/127 = 16%

*Note.* \*NELA’s cohorts went through a multi-tier selection process that required Superintendent endorsement prior to application. PTLA’s and SLA’s cohorts went through a multi-tier selection process that required Superintendent endorsement after selection. Thus the acceptance percentages are slightly skewed and actually lower than the combined 19.6% reported.

**RLA Selection Processes.** Each RLA created “an innovative selection process that is fair and rigorous, assesses more than a candidate’s experience and education, and adds a new component that enables interviewers to measure a candidate’s core beliefs” (Huckaby, 2012, p. 31). Of the three RLAs, NELA’s is the most university-centered. This is appropriate as participants are applying for and will receive an MSA degree from NCSU. The selection processes for PTLA and SLA are more decentralized (i.e., more decisions are made at the LEA level). Each RLA made modifications based on experiences with Cohorts 1 and 2. Of the three RLAs’ selection criteria, one is not necessarily better than the other. All three contain some similarities and some differences, all three use multiple measures, and all three allow for deeper analyses into applicants’ qualifications. However, in comparison to the selection processes of most university-based principal preparation programs nationwide, the RLAs collectively are much more deliberate and intentionally focused, more intricately involved, and more thorough in their selection criteria. For example, most colleges and universities (not all, as there are exceptions across the nation) only require standard paperwork (e.g., resume, transcripts, letters of recommendation, GRE/MAT scores, background check and perhaps a statement of purpose). In person, face-to-face interactions and/or interviews are rare and are not required for application and/or admission. MSA faculty members usually review the materials via a standard rubric,

and assign points based on minimum qualifications such as years of classroom teaching experience (without regard to and/or knowledge of whether that educational experience was deemed good or bad, effective or detrimental).

Table 3 provides a comparative overview of criteria used by each RLA, by alternative preparation programs, and by traditional MSA programs in North Carolina to select candidates into their individual pre-service leadership program. As noted, the RLA selection criteria are more robust and rigorous relative to the alternatives.

Table 3  
*RLA Selection Criteria in Comparison to Other Leadership  
 Preparation Programs*

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>NE LA</b>	<b>PTLA</b>	<b>SLA</b>	<b>Other Alternative Prep Programs (e.g., NYCLA, NLNS)</b>	<b>NC Traditional MSA</b>
Cx91. Application form (including transcripts, scores, and criminal background check)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Resume of professional experience (some minimal requirements)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Letters of recommendation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
4. Purpose statements/Letters of interest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
5. Writing sample/educational essay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	^
6. Master's degree with minimum 3.0 GPA	No	No	No	^	No
7. Superintendent's nomination	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
8. A homework assignment (e.g., 2- to 3-minute videotaped presentation on "Why I want to be a leader in a high-needs school")	No	Yes	Yes	^	No
9. Completion of self-assessment surveys (e.g., grit/perseverance/passion and leadership responsibilities)	Yes	No	No	^	No
10. Assessment Day (including role play, timed writing activity, scenario-based simulations, team decision making process, presentations, and response to scenarios)	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
11. Group Q&A sessions and interviews with panel of LEA partners	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
12. One-on-one Interviews	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	No
13. Commitment to closing the achievement gap, professional resilience, strong communication, willingness/ability to be self-reflective, possession of instructional	Yes	Yes	Yes	^	^

*Note.* ^=the extent to which certain programs do and/or do not implement these selection criteria varies widely from none (i.e., not at all) to some.

**Results of the Selection Process.** Overall, the RLA selection process for Cohorts 1, 2 and 3 ( $n=189$ ) yielded a fairly diverse group of participants: more than half are Caucasian (58%), over two-thirds are female (71%), and more than a third (38%) are African-American. Half (50%) possess a master's degree already (in a range of subjects from education to reading, administration, special education, and even counseling). One-third (36%) were elementary education majors during their undergraduate studies. NELA participants are less likely to have master's degrees (28% compared to the RLA Cohort 2 average of 50%) but this is not surprising since NELA culminates with a MSA degree. Relative to the RLA average, a larger proportion of the SLA participants are Caucasian (71% compared to the RLA average of 58%). A larger proportion of the PTLA participants are African-American (48% compared to the RLA average of 38%) and have advanced degrees (68% compared to the RLA average of 50%).

Table 4 includes descriptive statistics for all three Cohorts combined. In comparison to the Principal Fellows program in North Carolina, the RLA participants tend to be slightly older (36 versus 33), more racially diverse (38% Black versus 20%), and slightly more likely to already have a master's degree (50% versus 40%). In some regards, this makes sense, since the PF program and traditional MSA programs in NC are master's degree-granting programs.

Table 4  
*Demographic Data for RLA Cohorts 1, 2, and 3*

<b>Demographic Characteristic</b>	<b>All Cohort Interns</b>	<b>NELA (Cohorts 1, 2, and 3)</b>	<b>PTLA (Cohorts 1, 2, and 3)</b>	<b>SLA (Cohorts 1, 2, and 3)</b>
<b>Age Range</b>	25-59	25-53	25-59	27-54
<b>Age Median</b>	36	35	37	37
<b>Male</b>	29%	26%	33%	27%
<b>Female</b>	71%	74%	67%	73%
<b>Black</b>	38%	42%	48%	24%
<b>White</b>	58%	53%	49%	71%
<b>Asian</b>	1%	3%	0%	0%
<b>American Indian</b>	1%	0%	0%	3%
<b>Other Ethnicity</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%
<b>Master's Degree</b>	50% (95/189)	28% (18/65)	68% (43/63)	56% (34/61)

### **Research Question 3: Do RLAs Effectively Train Relative to the Alternatives?**

The three essential features of effective leadership preparation programs are: (1) having a program philosophy that clearly articulates a theory of action, (2) having a strong curriculum focused on instruction and school improvement, and (3) having well-designed and integrated coursework and field work (Orr et al., 2012). Each RLA has committed to designing and implementing a fully comprehensive leadership preparation program that incorporates these features by including the following research-based program elements (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Davis et al., 2005; Taylor, Cordeiro, & Chrispeels, 2009; Young, Crow, Ogawa, & Murphy, 2009):

- Rigorous recruitment and selection
- Full-time, year-long clinical internships
- Cohorts (including weekly, full-cohort, continued learning during the internship year)
- Curricula and seminars (including an action-research, case-study curriculum focus)
- Support systems (including multi-faceted coaching, mentoring, and supervising)
- Dynamic feedback and improvement loops
- Structures for evaluation and improvement
- Job placement and induction support

The actual structure of the RLAs includes four to six weeks of summer intensive study followed by ten months of full immersion K-12 internships. Throughout the course of the year, interns attend classes, presentations, seminars and school visits weekly with their cohort members and RLA supervisors to learn, reflect, process, discuss, question and discover.



**Cohorts and internships.** Similar to NYCLA and NLNS, all three NC RLAs offer cohort-based experiences. By participating in cohorts of 20 to 21 peers, NELA, PTLA, and SLA participants engage in the development of meaningful professional learning communities for aspiring school leaders. Evidence of the advantages of such cohort models is provided by Davis et al. (2005), Dorn, Papalewis, and Brown (1995), Muth and Barnett (2001), and numerous other researchers.

Likewise, all three RLAs require a full-time, year-long, paid, clinical internship experience, under the dedicated support of a carefully selected on-site principal mentor with extensive successful school leadership experience and a leadership academy supervisor/Executive Coach. To do this, NELA, PTLA, and SLA interns are released from their normal work duties and are afforded the opportunity to experience and participate in the entire cycle of a school year under the direction of an experienced principal who is “deemed successful and effective” in generating school improvement.<sup>7</sup> This practice is quite different from most traditional MSA programs across the state of North Carolina (and even nationwide),<sup>8</sup> in which most students complete part-time, hourly internships in addition to and on top of their regular, full-time, day job.

A high-quality, rigorous internship that is aligned to the program’s coursework and supervised by experienced and effective school leaders is “critically important to helping principal [candidates] learn to implement sophisticated practices” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007 p. 17). Such internships are characterized by:

- Ongoing reflection, supported by an experienced and effective supervisor or mentor;
- Projects meaningfully related to the complex and integrated nature of principal work (rather than discrete tasks or activities not centered on improving instruction);
- Integration with coursework, strengthening transfer of learning from classroom to application in the field of knowledge and skills;
- Alignment with guiding standards (ELCC and ISLLC) and program values; and

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<sup>7</sup> Note that these quotation marks were added by the evaluator as a point of question.

<sup>8</sup> NC Principal Fellows are an exception to this generalization.

- Ongoing, individualized assessment to support development.

As such, the year-long, full-time paid internships *is* the most notable, defining characteristic that separates the RLAs from the other, more traditional MSA principal preparation programs. A transformative internship experience is clearly critical to the success of these program models, rendering the coursework more valuable because it is tightly interwoven with practice (i.e., providing authentic, active learning experiences in school settings). This is not surprising, as research suggests most adults learn best when exposed to situations requiring the application of acquired skills, knowledge, and problem-solving strategies within authentic settings (Kolb & Boyatzis, 1999).

As the primary component and distinguishing feature of the RLA experience, these internships are designed to engage participants in meaningful, long-range, school-based activities and initiatives (e.g., assisting teachers with interventions, leading professional development, supporting instruction, etc.). They allow aspiring school leaders to solidify their knowledge by applying it to authentic situations (Cordeiro & Smith-Sloan, 1995; Murphy, 1993, 2002) and by facilitating growth in their educational orientation, perspectives, concepts, language, and skills (Crow & Matthews, 1998) with a focus on improving student achievement and other important school improvement goals. In addition to assisting their internship principals in various leadership tasks, RLA participants complete data-driven problems of practice and several other authentic internship leadership development projects aligned to program outcomes and the NC Standards for School Executives. Internship responsibilities often involve direct work with NCDPI's effort to turn around the lowest-achieving schools.

Logic models and objective performance measures are established for each internship project. Interns are assessed based on their ability to achieve their performance target during the action-learning project. For example, an intern might be asked to work with a team of teachers on a grade level or in a subject area for a semester to increase student achievement. The intern would need to implement what s/he had learned about data-driven instruction, instructional strategies, distributed leadership, developing a culture of continuous improvement, and other learning in working with the teacher team.

Baseline data (pre and post) might be used as one measure to assess the effectiveness of the intern's work. Much like medical students learning from attending doctors, RLA interns work with site principals to use data to diagnose the causes of a particular school problem, research best practice solutions, develop and implement reforms intended to treat the problem, use new data to assess the effectiveness of the treatment, and develop next steps based on these assessments.

During the year-long internship, RLA interns are expected to take the initiative to learn all functional areas of school and make themselves useful both by contributions to "big picture" instructional improvement efforts and by the inevitable "grunt work" that is a part of a principal's daily work. RLA interns are expected to demonstrate both flexibility and humility of being a learner in a new environment. As such, weekly, monthly, and biannual evaluations are completed for and with each intern in conjunction with his/her mentor principal, RLA Executive Coach, and superintendent. Feedback from participants included the following:

In our internship, we identify a problem of practice; when we feel the sense of urgency, we commit ourselves to the problem, implement some strategies to help solve the problem. We create new goals not only for students but also for teachers to work on. [NELA participant]

After she had been here for a few months, she just took off and became a second assistant principal. She now moves through the building and everyone knows her ... they partner with her, they trust her, they respect her, they work with her ... It's been amazing to watch her [my intern] grow. She had instructional leadership skills when she came. What she's done is develop those skills. [PTLA Mentor Principal]

SLA has been a life-changer for me. It helped me find my passion. Being in school every day with a powerful mentor principal really helped me make the transition from classroom teacher to building-level leader. He guided me gradually. My coach also believed in me. She pushed me and was honest with me and told me where I needed to grow. She really

helped me find my identity as an administrator. [SLA graduate]

**Curricula and seminars.** The central features of effective leadership preparation programs are “a program philosophy and curriculum that emphasizes leadership of instruction and school improvement,” “a comprehensive and coherent curriculum” aligned to research-based leadership standards, and the integration of program features that are centered on a consistent model of leadership and are mutually reinforcing (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, La Pointe, & Orr, 2010). A leadership preparation curriculum (whether traditional MSA programs or alternative RLAs) combines both coursework and field experience, and thus the program’s curriculum is threaded through both (Clark & Clark, 1996; Murphy, 2006; Taylor, Cordeiro, & Chrispeels, 2009; Young, Crow, Ogawa, & Murphy, 2009).

Similar to NYCLA and NLNS, all three of North Carolina’s RLAs offer a rigorous, action-research, case-study focused curriculum that engages participants in addressing issues similar to those they will face on the job (e.g., working through relevant data, problem identification, consideration of alternative solutions, and decision-making). The projects and cases are aligned with standards and are tied to educational leadership literature and research. The curriculum and seminars for each RLA are also coordinated with the NCDPI District and School Transformation (DST) Initiative to ensure consistency and coordination when working in the same LEAs to turn around the lowest-achieving schools. The integrated curriculum of the RLAs is quite different from the standard course-by-course curriculum of more traditional leadership preparation programs. Even with proper sequencing, the content in many of these MSA classes can be outdated and irrelevant, and taught in isolation by professors far removed from the field who emphasize theory over practice.

In contrast, weekly full-cohort, continued learning seminars during the internship year provide “just-in-time learning” for immediate problems and continue to develop aspiring leaders’ skills. Workshops, seminars, and classes are based on adult learning theory principles and are co-led by a blended faculty of academics and practitioners (teams of university faculty, exemplary LEA leadership practitioner scholars, and others with extensive school leadership experience ensuring an integration of research-based knowledge and practitioner knowledge). The RLA experience for participants also

includes site visits to high-performing, high-poverty schools, to provide concrete models of leadership approaches and school cultures that produce strong achievement results with student populations similar to those in which the participants will be placed. The curriculum for each RLA is constantly being evaluated and revised with help from advisory groups, practicing principals, and community leaders, and through comparisons to other traditional and non-traditional, alternative principal preparation programs. As such, each RLA's curriculum is a pertinent, timely, malleable document as opposed to being an archaic, stagnant, extraneous program of study. Once again, such flexibility is usually not present within traditional preparation programs. Each RLA is strategic and methodical in developing its participants and in ensuring that they engage in "powerful learning experiences." Each data-based curricular offerings, according to UCEA (2012), should:

- Be authentic, meaningful, relevant, and problem-finding;
- Involve sense-making around critical problems of practice;
- Explore, critique, and deconstruct from an equity perspective (race, culture, language);
- Require collaboration and interdependence;
- Develop confidence in leadership;
- Place both the professor and student in a learning situation;
- Empower learners and give them responsibility for their own learning;
- Shift perspective from the classroom to the school, LEA, or state level; and
- Have a reflective component.

During various stages in the program, RLA interns are placed in pre-arranged project teams. The composition of the teams maximizes the diversity of experiences, opinions, perspectives, personality types, and learning styles within a group. Purposeful pressure is placed on the teams as a mechanism to understand group dynamics, develop interpersonal skills, and learn interdependency. An important component for each RLA intern is the development of the skills necessary to work with individuals the leader did not choose and thus prepare them for their first principalship. Throughout each RLA, the emphasis on high-need schools and the skills and strategies needed to turn around low performance is prominent and palpable. For a full description of each RLA's training program, see *North*

*Carolina Regional Leadership Academies: Final 2012 Activity Report*  
([http://cerenc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/RLA\\_First-Year-Report-03-04-13.pdf](http://cerenc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/RLA_First-Year-Report-03-04-13.pdf)).

**Support Systems: coaching, mentoring, supervising.** All three RLAs benefit from a multifaceted, sustained structure of support involving Leadership Academy Directors and Supervisors, Executive Coaches, mentor principals with extensive school leadership experience, and multiple, highly qualified instructors at various stages throughout their program. The supervisors, coaches, mentors, and instructors are each carefully selected and provided with initial training and ongoing development. Most (if not all) of the Executive Coaches are retired principals and superintendents (presumably effective during their tenure) deployed to work with interns based on specific, individual, developmental needs. The Executive Coaches serve in supportive, supervisory roles as external sources of confidential and expert advice. The in-school mentor principals play a different role, targeted at advisement in the daily functions of the internship. The mentor principal is a source of advice and information regarding LEA matters and helps guide the action research projects. Finally, for transitional and early career support, graduates from each RLA work with Leadership Academy faculty in seminar settings and one-on-one mentoring meetings after job placement. For example, SLA's Advisory Committee decided that, in addition to monthly full-cohort meetings, "Cohort 1 members who have positions of principal or director will receive monthly visits from their coach (same coach as last year) and will always have access to their coach by email/phone."

This additional induction support from the coaches and mentors, involving ongoing professional development, is provided to the first- and second-year school leaders to address immediate problems of practice. During this two-year induction period, RLA graduates/assistant principals/principals continue to engage with their cohort, coaches, mentors, and supervisors in furthering their leadership skills even after they assume school leadership roles. RLA graduates learn new ways to practice and reflect and, in the process, new strategies for enriching leadership in their schools in ways that have an immediate impact on teaching practices and student learning.

This highly supportive and reflective approach, whereby aspiring school leaders gain both the interpersonal and intrapersonal

lessons of leadership, is a major difference between traditional MSA programs and alternative programs like North Carolina's RLAs. Ongoing support and mentoring post-graduation is a key component for new leaders and critically absent from traditional programs. The induction of new principals is best achieved when it addresses the needs of principals in their different developmental stages. As such, RLA's induction and mentoring programs are designed to enhance professional effectiveness and foster continued growth during a time of intense learning. The RLAs are committed to systematically supporting and challenging new leaders to reflect on their practice, to promoting new principals' heightened job performance, and to developing personal learning goals.

**Program evaluation and improvement.** Dynamic feedback and improvement loops, involving systematic evaluations of curriculum offerings, seminar sessions, guest presentations, site visits, professional development opportunities, conference attendance, internship placements, assignments, mentoring, and coaching techniques all ensure continuous and evidence-driven RLA improvement. It is obvious from this overarching evaluation that each RLA engages in a *daily* process of individual program evaluation and improvement. Due to the nature of the work, most adjustments are based on observational and subjective data (e.g., feedback, reflection, timing, etc.) as opposed to concrete, statistical objective data.

NELA's curriculum development and revision occurs on a regular basis to align program purposes and content to new developments in the field; to refresh content, readings, and learning experiences; and to check on potential program drift that can occur over time. The Executive Directors of NELA meet every Monday morning to debrief the previous week, share updates, review scope and sequence, and process observations and evaluations from a multitude of sources (e.g., specialized trainings, classes, site visits, professional development opportunities, interns, Executive Coaches, and mentor principals). Content is reviewed and refined along with instructional strategies, timing, and presenters. For example, the instructor, sequencing of content, and delivery method for NELA's Understanding by Design training was tweaked and modified based on experiences and feedback from the previous year. This type of continuous reflection and refinement happens daily.

PTLA's Leadership Team also meets weekly to debrief, revise, tweak, and plan. A key driving force of PTLA has been the consistent sense of a committed partnership between PTLA's Executive Director, coaches, UNCG faculty, and the four LEAs involved. Since each LEA's superintendent serves on the PTLA Board, issues are resolved at a higher level, buy-in is attained, and "things" appear to be shepherded through the system much easier and quicker. Likewise, PTLA's Advisory Group meetings are notable, concrete indicators of PTLA's collaboration with LEA partners in support of the ongoing efforts of the program (e.g., interviewing and hiring, internship responsibilities and roles, application planning, and selection of candidates). Advisory Group discussions on intern growth and progress have been rich with photos and videos supporting data



documents, and decisions regarding internship sites and principal mentors were also made in collaboration.

Monthly meetings with SREC superintendents, quarterly meetings with SLA Advisory Committee members, and weekly ongoing interactions with mentor principals and LEA staff continue to provide SLA valuable data and feedback on its processes and activities for improvement purposes. SLA leaders also meet weekly. They are committed to the growth and development of their executive interns through lessons learned.

#### **Research Question 4: Do RLAs Effectively Place Graduates in Targeted Schools/Districts?**

The goal of the RLAs is to increase the number of principals qualified to lead transformational change in low-performing schools in both rural and urban areas. As such, RLA interns receive job placement support, provided by the Leadership Academy in conjunction with participating LEAs, to determine appropriate matches of aspiring leaders to the schools in which they are placed. Table 5 indicates that interns from each of the three cohorts, and from each of the three RLAs, have been placed in high-needs schools where, on average, two-thirds (66.2%) of the student populations are eligible for free or reduced lunch (versus the NC state average of 55.9%), where overall average Reading/English I scores are less than 63% (versus the NC state average of 71.2%), and where overall average Mathematics/Algebra I scores hover around the 72% mark (versus the NC state average of 82.8%).

Table 5

*RLA Internship Placements: Free/Reduced Lunch, Size, English, and Mathematics Scores*

Placement Site Characteristic	RLA	Internship Year			Aver for Cohort 1, 2, & 3
		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	
<b>% Students Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	NELA	68.7%	60.2%	62.5%	63.8%
	PTLA	75.8%	66.6%	72.4%	71.6%
	SLA	68.5%	63.3%	57.8%	63.2%
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>71.0%</b>	<b>63.4%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>66.2%</b>
<b>School Size</b>	NELA	550	668	520	579
	PTLA	579	739	679	666
	SLA	615	711	662	663
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>636</b>
<b>Reading/English I Proficiency Rates</b>	NELA	59.7%	64.8%	66.7%	63.7%
	PTLA	55.6%	60.9%	58.1%	58.2%
	SLA	64.6%	66.8%	69.3%	66.9%
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>59.9%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>62.9%</b>
<b>Mathematics/Algebra I Proficiency Rates</b>	NELA	74.0%	74.8%	71.1%	73.3%
	PTLA	67.3%	71.1%	72.2%	70.2%
	SLA	70.1%	71.8%	78.6%	73.5%
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>70.5%</b>	<b>72.6%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>72.4%</b>

According to the original RFP for the RLAs, the expectation is that “successful candidates will be placed and serve in high-needs schools” (i.e., higher-poverty and lower-performance than the North Carolina state average). Table 6 indicates that graduates from the first two cohorts from each of the three RLAs have been placed in leadership positions. Table 7 indicates that graduates from the first two cohorts from each of the three RLAs are serving in high-need schools.

Table 6  
*RLA Graduate Job Placements*

Cohort	NELA Graduates	PTLA Graduates	SLA Graduates	RLAs
Cohort 1 - June 2012	n=21 6 Principals 8 Assistant Princ 3 Central Office 2 Teach/Facilitator 2 Left RLA Region	n=21 3 Principals 14 Assistant Princ 1 Central Office 1 Teach/Facilitator 2 Left RLA Region	n=20 8 Principals 7 Assistant Princ 1 Central Office 0 Teach/Facilitator 4 Left RLA Region	n=62 17 Principals 29 Assistant Princ 5 Central Office 0 Teach/Facilitator 8 Left RLA Region
Cohort 2 - June 2013	n=21 0 Principals 18 Assistant Princ 1 Central Office 2 Teach/Facilitator 0 Left RLA Region	n=20 0 Principals 13 Assistant Princ 2 Central Office 5 Teach/Facilitator 0 Left RLA Region	n=21 2 Principals 17 Assistant Princ 0 Central Office 2 Teach/Facilitator 0 Left RLA Region	n=62 2 Principals 48 Assistant Princ 3 Central Office 9 Teach/Facilitator 0 Left RLA Region
TOTAL S (as of March 2014)	n=42 6 Principals 26 Assistant Princ 4 Central Office 4 Teach/Facilitator 2 Left RLA Region	n=41 3 Principals 27 Assistant Princ 3 Central Office 6 Teach/Facilitator 2 Left RLA Region	n=41 10 Principals 24 Assistant Princ 1 Central Office 2 Teach/Facilitator 4 Left RLA Region	n=124 19 Principals (62%) 77 Assistant Princ(10%) 8 Central Office(6%) 12Teach/Facilitator(15%) 8 Left RLA Region (6%)

Table 7  
*RLA Job Placements: Free and Reduced Lunch, School Size, English, and Mathematics Scores*

Placement Site Characteristic	RLA	Job Placements		RLAs
		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	
% Students Free/Reduced Lunch	NELA	77.9%	60.8%	69.3%
	PTLA	74.7%	61.7%	68.2%
	SLA	67.4%	66.6%	67.0%
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>73.3%</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>68.2%</b>
School Size	NELA	480	572	526
	PTLA	692	804	748
	SLA	770	724	747
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>674</b>
English Proficiency Rates	NELA	55.9%	66.0%	60.9%
	PTLA	55.3%	67.8%	61.6%
	SLA	65.8%	65.2%	65.5%
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>66.3%</b>	<b>62.6%</b>
Mathematics Proficiency Rates	NELA	66.4%	75.1%	70.7%
	PTLA	68.9%	74.3%	71.6%
	SLA	76.3%	72.7%	74.5%
	<b>RLAs</b>	<b>70.5%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>

Trends in the data for the past three years indicate that Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 graduates acquired jobs in schools that are struggling and where, on average, more than two-thirds (68.2%) of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch (versus the NC state average of 55.9%), where the proportion of at- or above-grade level Reading/English I scores hover around 62.6% (versus the NC state average of 71.2%), and where the proportion of at- or above-grade level Mathematics/Algebra I scores hover just above the 72% mark (versus the NC state average of 82.8%). The range of scores and the range of growth in these schools are great. These data are in line with high-poverty, high-need, low-performing schools.

A portion of NC RttT's funds have been available to stimulate and strengthen the state's efforts to turn around their lowest achieving schools. The TALAS initiative targets the bottom 5% of elementary, middle and high schools, all of which have performance composites below 60% (based on 2009-10 data). TALAS also targets high schools with graduation rates below 60%. A total of 118 schools met one of these two criteria. In addition, North Carolina's District and School Transformation (DST) team works with the lowest 10% of districts in the state (n=12). Since their objectives intersect, the RLAs work closely with some of these schools and districts.

- 24 of the 118 DST schools (20%) and 6 of the 12 DST districts (50%) (i.e., Edgecombe, Halifax, Hertford, Northampton, Warren, Weldon) are located in the NELA region.
- 23 of the 118 DST schools (19%) and 0 of the 12 DST districts (0%) are located in the PTLA region.
- 14 of the 118 DST schools (12%) and 2 of the 12 DST districts (17%) (i.e., Anson, Robeson) are located in the SLA region.
- 61 of the 118 DST schools (52%) and 8 of the 12 DST districts (67%) are located in the three RLA regions.

Table 8 indicates the number of RLA interns and graduates that are currently working in TALAS schools and/or NC Focus schools. A "focus school" is a Title I school in North Carolina that, based on the most recent data available, is contributing to the achievement gap in the State. A focus school is 1) a school that has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving

subgroup and the lowest-achieving subgroup or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in graduation rates; or 2) a school that has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates (e.g., less than 60 percent over a number of years). These determinations are based on the achievement and lack of progress over a number of years of one or more subgroups of students.

Table 8  
*RLA Intern and Job Placements (as of March 2014): Number of NC DST/TALAS and Focus Schools*

	NELA n=60	PTLA n=61	SLA n=57
Cohort 1 Job Placements	3 in TALAS 2 in Focus	5 in TALAS 3 in Focus	0 in TALAS 1 in Focus
Cohort 2 Job Placements	3 in TALAS 1 in Focus	2 in TALAS 1 in Focus	1 in TALAS 4 in Focus
Cohort 3 Intern Placements	2 in TALAS 3 in Focus	2 in TALAS 4 in Focus	0 in TALAS 2 in Focus
<b>Total Cohort Members</b>	<b>8 in TALAS*</b> <b>6 in Focus</b>	<b>9 in TALAS</b> <b>8 in Focus</b>	<b>1 in TALAS</b> <b>8 in Focus</b>
<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>6/24 TALAS</b> <b>(25%)^</b> <b>5 Focus</b>	<b>8/23 TALAS</b> <b>(35%)^</b> <b>8 Focus</b>	<b>1/14 TALAS</b> <b>(7%)^</b> <b>7 Focus</b>

*Note.* # n=Total number of past and current cohort members, to date.

\* One TALAS school in this region is also a Focus school; Cohort members in that school are double-counted.

~ NELA and PTLA placed more than one Cohort member in some TALAS and FOCUS schools; figures in **Total Schools** row do not double-count schools that hired or hosted more than one Cohort member.

^ Percent of total number of TALAS schools in region with one or more Cohort members.

### **Research Question 5: Are RLAs Cost-Effective Relative to Alternative Programs?**

The larger RttT Evaluation Team is preparing a cost-effectiveness analysis of the RLAs, relative to extant comparable leadership development programs. This analysis will be part of a separate report (expected to be completed Fall 2014) that will include cost-

effectiveness analyses of several other RttT initiatives. When completed, this analysis will provide a basis for value comparisons between RLAs and other models.

From an initial, cursory assessment, yes, the RLAs are cost-effective relative to alternative programs. Without a full-time paid internship of \$40,000 a year, the average cost (split between the candidates and the state) of obtaining a MSA degree (from a North Carolina state-sponsored university) and principal licensure is \$53,000 (total of \$93,000 with full-time paid internship). The cost for each North Carolina Principal Fellow graduate (who likewise obtain a MSA degree and principal licensure) is approximately \$100,000. The costs for each RLA are comparable. For example, the cost per NELA candidate is around \$116,000 (including a year-long, full-time, paid internship, MSA degree and principal licensure). The cost per PTLA candidate runs about \$110,000 (including a year-long, full-time, paid internship, 24 graduate degree credits and principal licensure) and the cost per SLA candidate is \$100,000 (including a year-long, full-time, paid internship, 18 graduate degree credits, and principal licensure). In contrast, the costs for some of the nationally recognized, highly touted alternative programs are significantly (10 to 50%) higher. For example, the cost per New Leaders for New Schools graduate is at least \$130,000. Similarly, the cost per New York City Leadership Academy graduate is more than \$150,000. For a fuller description of each RLA's budget please see the *Regional Leadership Academies Cost Effectiveness Framework*, ([http://cerenc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/RLA\\_cost\\_effectiveness\\_framework\\_3-1-12.pdf](http://cerenc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/RLA_cost_effectiveness_framework_3-1-12.pdf)).

## **RLA Outcomes**

Data on the long-term and distal outcomes of the RLAs are not yet available. However, some intermediary outcomes from participants, from mentor principals, and from partnering superintendents indicate approval, satisfaction, endorsement and support for each of the RLAs.

First, from the RLA interns and graduates themselves, there is a clear sense of gratitude coupled with a palpable sense of urgency to be transformational leaders committed to student learning. They feel empowered with “the will and the skill” to be true turnaround principals. Powerful comments from a few RLA participants below

are comparable and indicative of comments made by many of the RLA candidates over the past three years across all three Leadership Academies.

PTLA has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life. PTLA helped me develop my skills to lead a high need school to success. I have gained the knowledge and developed my craft and leadership style to promote excellence and student achievement. I believe PTLA allowed to me become the type of servant, holistic leader that is needed to turn around low performing schools. I feel confident and prepared as I carry out my daily managerial tasks while still being an instructional leader in my building, focusing on students' academic, personal and emotional development. I feel capable facilitating professional development, evaluating and working with teachers, organizing scheduling processes, counseling students, communicating with all stakeholders, building collaboration and relationships, and developing processes to ensure a quality education for ALL students. Beyond that, PTLA is a network of resources and wonderful people that will support me through it all. For me, PTLA also stands for *People to Trust and Lean on at All times!* [PTLA graduate 1 and current Assistant Principal]

PTLA is about developing individuals who will be the moving force to turn failing schools around. The year long internship in a high-needs school allows interns to identify specific strategies, techniques, and programs which drastically increase success quickly with sustainable results. I experienced an urgency of immediate action and learned how to quickly assess strengths and weaknesses of staff, procedures, and students within a school. Mentor principals share skills, strategies, and programs which have proven results over time. [PTLA graduate 2 and current Assistant Principal]

The program can really be described as a journey: A journey to discover our personal visions, what we believe about children and how they learn, and how we can transform schools and classrooms to nurture every child's talents and potential. [SLA graduate and current Assistant Principal]

Everything I have learned in NELA has helped me as an AP. Our Operation NELAs have really helped me this year to “think quick” when working with parents, students, gangs, and territorial issues ... I am using data to build relationships with kids and families. [NELA graduate and current assistant principal]

NELA affected our hearts and our minds. We are applying what we learned. We are removing the blinders, one kid at a time ... giving voice, impacting and changing the way kids see and interact with the world. It’s not all about test scores. [NELA graduate and current Principal]

Second, and similar to the RLA participants themselves, RLA mentor principals were impressed with the competency and wide range of skills provided, stating that “the program is designed in such a way that interns get a true depiction of school leadership.” Another mentor was not only “impressed with the work ethic, educational values, heart and compassion behind every thought process [candidate] brings to the table” but found that that drive actually motivated her to be a better principal and to want to expose her intern “to every experience possible as a school leader.” Mentor remarks were consistently positive with regard to the RLA advisors as well. “They are very visible in the schools, extremely responsive to the needs of the intern and overall success of the program. Most importantly, the advisors are not far removed from the principal’s seat and can provide real-life practical coaching to the intern.”

When specifically asked, “*If you have had other interns in an MSA program, in your opinion, how does the preparation of the MSA intern compare to the RLA intern?*” examples responses included, “There is no comparison. Elbow learning is the process we need” and “SLA is more rigorous and has a far greater level of coaching support and of accountability.” Likewise, “PTLA provides intensive, relevant leadership training for high quality educators to pursue the challenging task of leading today's high needs school” and “PTLA provides the component of ongoing support that insures the success of the graduates once they enter the role of administrator. That feature is an added benefit that is not available in traditional MSA programs



where MSA interns only get pieces of the experience versus full-time, hands-on real experience.” Others concurred wholeheartedly with these perspectives:

No comparison, the SLA Internship is much better than any other internship I have supervised. One thing that stands out is the connection between the Coaches and the Intern and the Coaches and the building principal. Site visits and measures of accountability are higher than in any other experience. [SLA Mentor Principal]

The administrative preparation program provided by NELA represents a major game changer for our local schools as we prepare an internal pipeline of future leaders. The interns are well prepared, well trained and bring a wealth of knowledge, understanding and tangible skills which allows each of them to immediately add value to the school communities they are assigned. Our district fully supports the NELA program and looks forward to our continued relationship. [NELA Superintendent]

Frequent and consistent support of the SLA Coach provides effective feedback, needs of the intern are addressed quickly and a focus plan for improvement is in place. In other words, Interns have a clear understanding of weaknesses and are coached to make them, if not strengths, at the very least, no longer a weakness. They target skills needed to be worked on, they impart strengths in PD for our school which touches and changes many (students, teachers, coaches, principals). [SLA Mentor Principal]

Third and likewise, the RLA Superintendents commended the Leadership Academies for striving “to keep our best leaders in this area where they can do the most good for our students.” According to one Superintendent, “This school system has benefited tremendously from NELA and fully supports a continued strategic partnership as we work to develop and grow aspiring leaders within the district.” Superintendents associated with the RLAs “see leading a high-need school as a specialty within the principalship—the work is harder, more complex, more all-consuming, and it requires a different kind of

leader” (Superintendent, of “large urban” district) and find the RLAs to be “a model school administrator training program unlike any other I have been associated with. The program is growing the brightest and most highly skilled administrators in our county” (Superintendent of “small rural” district). Even an Executive Director for Teach for America in North Carolina and the Executive Director of the state’s Principal and Assistant Principal Association chimed in by declaring that the “RLA’s proven ability to build a leadership pipeline and train effective school leaders is critical to providing all students in North Carolina with an excellent education that prepares them for college and careers” and “This innovative program is deliberate, effective, and has proven successful in developing and incorporating critical, research-based practices into participants’ school improvement efforts” respectively.

We raised our hand right away to help write this grant and develop this Leadership Academy program. We saw a real gap between what we needed in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities and the quality of candidates we were getting for principal and assistant principal positions for our high-need schools. [PTLA Superintendent]

NELA is a model School Administrator training program unlike any other I have been associated with as a Superintendent. The program is growing the brightest and most highly skilled administrators in our county. [NELA Superintendent]

We have hired every intern to date—including one as principal of a high school—and all of them are amongst our most thoughtful, energetic leaders. [SLA Superintendent]

### **Summary Findings and Implications**

In summary, all three RLAs utilize essential features of effective leadership preparation programs as organizing principles in designing and delivering their individual principal preparation programs. The content, pedagogy, and experiences reflect best practices for developing leaders who can facilitate high-quality teaching and learning for all children. Fidelity of implementation of program

designs (i.e., the degree to which the interventions have been delivered as intended) has been strong (e.g., each RLA has recruited and prepared over 60 “turnaround principal” candidates). Participants in every cohort in each RLA have found internship placements in targeted schools and LEAs (i.e., low-performing schools, though not always schools on the list of the 5% of lowest-achieving schools in the State). The year-long internship experience for the principal candidates has consistently provided them with mentoring and coaching that the candidates believe will enhance their effectiveness as principals. Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 graduates have found employment in low-performing schools and LEAs (19 as principals, 77 as assistant principals, 8 as central office leaders, and 9 as teacher leaders/facilitators). On average (based on data from 2008-09 through 2011-12), their employing schools host higher numbers of lower-income students (68.2% receive free or reduced-price lunch versus the NC state average of 55.9%) and exhibit lower achievement rates (e.g., the Reading/ English I pass rate is 62.6% versus the NC state average of 71.2%; the Mathematics/Algebra I pass rate is 72.3% versus the NC state average of 82.8%). Data on the long-term and distal outcomes of the RLAs are not yet available.

Aspects to consider moving forward include: (1) How strong are the partnerships with certain LEAs (i.e., Are some LEAs more committed than others? Why? How?); (2) How much influence does each RLA actually have in the hiring process for individual LEAs? (i.e., Who hires whom? Why? How? When? Where?); and (3) Even though RLA participants are specifically prepared to lead in high-need schools, should every graduate be placed in a high-poverty, low-performing NC school? (i.e., Does the RLA graduate feel ready, willing, and able to assume a critical leadership position right now?). and 4) Since research indicates that it takes between three to six years to turn around failing schools (AIR, 2011) how should the RLA evaluation track/assess this? The answers to these and similar questions are beyond the scope of this evaluation.

Further evaluation should continue to monitor, observe, and track the placements of RLA participants and graduates and descriptive data regarding their schools should be collected, disaggregated, and analyzed. The timing of the RLA graduates and their limited placements in principal positions to date have constrained the evaluation team’s ability to examine the longer term

effects of the graduates on school improvements. Recent research has begun to shed light on the ways that principals' effects on the performance of their schools, including value-added measures, principal evaluations, teacher turnover, and other measures, may be done (Grissom, Kalogrides & Loeb 2012). As more RLA graduates assume the principalship, these techniques should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program on the overall objectives for the RttT funds – improving student performance and teaching quality.

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## Appendix

### North Carolina's Regional Leadership Academies

#### *Northeast Leadership Academy (NELA)*

The first RLA, NELA, began serving North Carolina's northeast region during the fall of 2010. NELA is based at North Carolina State University's (NCSU) College of Education and serves the following 14 partner LEAs: Bertie, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Nash-Rocky Mount, Northampton, Roanoke Rapids, Vance, Warren, Washington, and Weldon City (total of 70,348 students served). It was established to serve a cluster of low-achieving rural schools.

- NELA is a two-year program that involves part-time study during Year 1 and full-time study—including a full-time, year-long internship—during Year 2.
- Successful NELA candidates are granted NC Principal Licensure and a Master of School Administration (MSA), conferred by NCSU.
- NELA selected and inducted 24 members into Cohort 1 in the summer of 2010; 21 members of this group (87.5%) completed the program in May 2012 and are receiving continuing early career support through 2014. Cohort 1 internships were supported by NC RttT funds.
  - Most (81%) Cohort 1 members are now employed as educational leaders in the surrounding LEAs (six of the 21 as principals, eight as assistant principals, three in Central Office positions, two as teachers/facilitators, and two have left the NELA Region).
- Cohort 2 members were selected and inducted in the fall of 2011. These 21 participants completed their internships and the program in May 2013 and have career support through 2014.
  - Most (90%) Cohort 2 members are now employed as educational leaders in the surrounding LEAs (18 of the 21 as assistant principals, one in a Central Office position, and two as teachers/facilitators).
- Cohort 3 members were selected and inducted in the fall of 2012 and these 20 participants will complete the program in May 2014. They are completing their internships now.

- NELA participants make a three-year agreement to work in northeastern NC schools.
- NELA has been established by and embedded in Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, a division of NCSU's College of Education.

*Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy (PTLA)*

PTLA is based at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) and is a partnership between the Piedmont Triad Education Consortium (PTEC) and the following four LEAs: Alamance-Burlington, Asheboro City, Guilford, and Winston-Salem/Forsyth (total of 150,616 students served). It is a one-year program.

- Successful PTLA graduates are granted NC Principal Licensure and can earn up to 24 credits toward a UNCG Post Masters Certificate in School Administration or an MSA degree from the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations.
- PTLA selected and inducted 21 members into Cohort 1 in the summer of 2011; 21 members of this group (100%) completed the program in June 2012 and are receiving continued career support through 2014.
  - Most (86%) Cohort 1 members are now employed as educational leaders in the surrounding LEAs (three of the 21 as principals, 14 as assistant principals, one in a Central Office position, two as teachers/facilitators, and two have left the PTLA Region).
- Cohort 2 members were selected and inducted in the summer of 2012. These 20 participants completed their internships and the program in June 2013 and are receiving continued career support through 2014.
  - Most (75%) Cohort 2 members are now employed as educational leaders in the surrounding LEAs (13 of the 20 as assistant principals, two in Central Office positions, and five as teachers/facilitators).
- Cohort 3 members were selected in the summer of 2013 and these 22 participants will complete the program in June 2014. They are completing their internships now.

- PTLA participants commit to three years of service in partnering LEAs upon program completion.
- PTLA has been established by UNCG faculty in partnership with LEAs and a regional education consortium.

*Sandhills Leadership Academy (SLA)*

SLA was founded by the Sandhills Regional Education Consortium (SREC) and serves the following 13 LEAs: Anson, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland, and Whiteville City (total of 158,979 students served). It is a one-year program.

- Fayetteville State University (FSU), the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP), and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) are partners in SLA.
- Successful SLA graduates are granted NC Principal Licensure and can earn up to 18 graduate-level credits at UNCP or FSU.
- SLA selected 21 members and inducted 20 members into Cohort 1 in the summer of 2011; 20 members of this group (95%) completed the program in June 2012 and are receiving continued career support through 2013.
  - Most (90%) Cohort 1 members are now employed as educational leaders in the surrounding LEAs (eight of the 20 as principals, seven as assistant principals, one in a Central Office position, and four have left the SLA Region).
- Cohort 2 members were selected and inducted in the summer of 2012. These 21 participants completed their internships and the program in June 2013 and are receiving continued career support through 2014.
  - Most (90%) Cohort 1 members are now employed as educational leaders in the surrounding LEAs (two of the 21 as principals, 17 as assistant principals, and two as teachers/facilitators).
- Cohort 3 members were selected in the summer of 2013 and these 20 participants will complete the program in June 2014. They will receive continued support through 2015. They are completing their internships now.

- SLA participants commit to serving in the Sandhills region for a minimum of four years following program completion.
- SLA has been established by the SREC LEAs in partnership with two universities and NCCAT.

# Challenges for Novice School Leaders: Facing Today's Issues in School Administration

Andrea P. Beam, Russell L. Claxton, and Samuel J. Smith

## Abstract

*Challenges for novice school leaders evolve as information is managed differently and as societal and regulatory expectations change. This study addresses unique challenges faced by practicing school administrators (n=159) during their first three years in a school leadership position. It focuses on their perceptions, how perceptions of present novices compare to those of experienced school leaders, and how pre-service programs can better prepare them for these challenges. Findings showed that perceptions of present novice school leaders vary somewhat from those of experienced school leaders. Two themes shared relatively the same prominence among experienced leaders as they did with novices: navigating politics and gaining a sense of credibility. Experienced leaders expounded more on specific political hurdles with school boards, other teachers, and parents, and—regarding these same populations—experienced leaders voiced that they wished they had been more successful in their earlier years in developing credibility more quickly with stakeholders. A theme not occurring at all among present novices but noted by five experienced leaders was that of adjusting to the culture of a new school as its leader. This phenomenon may be explained by the value more seasoned leaders have developed for factors inherent in a campus culture.*

**Keywords:** *educational leadership, principalship, induction, orientation*

The transition from instructing in the classroom to leading from an office is becoming a more difficult one as accountability measures demand increasingly more from school leaders (Brown, 2006). Current novice administrators face challenges that they may not have anticipated in their pre-service preparation programs. School leaders

are often expected to be super hero like and according to Brill (2006) “burst out of the cloistered phone booth of an administrative credentialing program, take to the air, and effectively meet the needs of all students, teachers, parents and higher-level administrators.” Additionally, the challenges current novice administrators face may be quite different from those faced by their predecessors who may have been novices several years or decades prior. Understanding challenges during school leaders’ induction phase may serve to inform the structure and curriculum of school leader preparation programs.

Therefore, this study examined perceptions of both new and experienced school leaders regarding the challenges faced during their first three years in leadership positions. The dual purposes of this investigation were (1) to increase understanding of role challenges and expectations of novice school leaders and (2) to compare whether the realities or the perceptions of those realities changed over time with longevity.

### **Review of the Literature**

To identify specific challenges faced by novice school leaders has been the aim of a variety of previous studies. Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012), for example, noted that the most commonly named challenges were workload and task management, conflicts with adults and students, and curriculum and instruction issues. Hertting’s (2008) study resulted in a quite different list of demanding issues: diversity, reform initiatives, accountability measures, scarce resources, and inadequate support from supervisors. Focusing strictly on urban settings, Tredway (2003) found student discipline to be the primary challenge for new administrators. A Turkish study (Sincar, 2013) asked beginning principals to identify their major challenges, to which they responded as follows: bureaucracy, insufficient resources, resistance to innovation, lack of in-service training, and issues related to student poverty. A similar study conducted in Namibia (Mushaandja, 2013) resulted in the following: chronic stress, overloaded schedule, simultaneous assimilation both to a new school environment and to a new leadership position, adjustment from teachers being peers to being subordinates, and the sense of isolation from supervisors. The Namibian study went further to explore

frustrations of new administrators as they attempted to apply theoretical textbook principles from their preparation programs to the practical realities of the principalship. Crow (2010) mentioned that even administrative duties and responsibilities can compete against each other for a school leader's time and energy.

Challenges faced by new school leaders are not just task oriented. Northfield (2013) describes how new leaders must sometimes overcome leadership perceptions established by previous administration. A new school leader might have to navigate the challenges of establishing credibility among individuals or groups that have obtained formal or informal power within the school. These sometimes negative perceptions of administration can add to the challenges faced by novice leaders.

It is interesting to note comparisons among various settings and between novice and veteran administrators. Jagt, Shen, and Hsieh (2001), for instance, found that there was no association between the rank order of perceived challenges between novice principals in elementary schools and those in secondary schools. There was, however, a marked difference in how participants perceived the severity of those challenges. Secondary principals perceived their challenges as being much more severe than did elementary principals. Additionally, the same study found challenges to be perceived as more severe in urban and rural settings than in suburban settings, and more severe in large schools than in medium-sized or small schools.

A comparison made in the Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012), study is strongly related to the second purpose of the present study, which is to compare perceptions of present novice administrators with those of experienced administrators. Their study found no significant difference between perceptions of the two groups. The present study, however, found that in some aspects of leadership the perceptions can be quite different.

## **The Present Study**

### **Method**

Data were collected using a combination of an online survey and a follow-up focus-group conducted when some of the participants were on campus.

**Sample and setting.** The population consisted of candidates enrolled in a blended online-residential graduate program at a private non-profit university in Virginia. Prior to arriving on campus for residential courses, candidates received an email link to an online version of the survey. Participants ( $n=159$ ) in the quantitative aspect of the study were those who responded. Based on the courses included in the online survey, and the answers to the demographic portion of the survey, all participants were current school leaders enrolled in a graduate level school leadership program. The qualitative aspect involved a focus group of 8 members, a subgroup of those who had already taken the online survey, who volunteered to participate in the one-hour focus group.

**Quantitative instrument.** In order to develop quantitative survey questions, researchers started with a review of the current literature on challenges faced by administrators during the first few years in a school leadership position. Once a list of the primary challenges was developed, these items were grouped into more general categories in order to develop a manageable number of survey questions. For example, online reports were considered part of the category of “paperwork,” and teacher evaluations were listed under “working with teachers.” After combining similar terms, the following list of challenges was identified to use in development of the survey:

- **Paperwork:** “desk work” conducted by school leaders, including reports, documentation, forms, and any other electronic or paper records.
- **Special education:** management and supervision of all special services, including learning disorders, behavior disorders, gifted education, and facilities requirements; also paperwork and meetings specific to special education.
- **Parent relations:** parent group and individual meetings, phone calls, electronic and paper communication, parent support organizations, afterschool parent activities, and conflict resolution.
- **Teacher relations:** day-to-day interaction with teachers, including classroom observations, formal evaluations, teacher meetings, e-mail and paper communication, professional development, and general supervision.



- ***Student discipline:*** proactive and reactive measures regarding student conduct, behavior management, teacher classroom support, assignment of consequences, and communication with parents and students.
- ***Curriculum and instruction:*** scheduling, course management, textbook and material management, data analysis, and testing.

Participants were asked to complete the survey of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions, reporting their perceptions about administrative challenges faced during the first three years in the position. The items were constructed so that higher ratings would express a higher level of challenge and a stronger negative perception by the participant. An open-ended question was also included in the survey to allow participants to address issues that may not have been included in the multiple-choice questions. Survey questions were as follows:

1. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
2. What is your current position?
3. How many years have you served as a school administrator?
4. How would you describe your current school placement?
5. Please rate the degree to which each of the following tasks was a challenge for you within the first three years of your leadership: Paperwork, Observations/Evaluations, Time Management, Special Education, Faculty Relations, Staff Relations, Parent Relations, Student Discipline, Master Schedule, School Finance
6. When you were a new administrator in your first three years, what other challenges impacted you? (open-ended question)

**Qualitative instrument.** The qualitative element of the study served both to validate and enrich the quantitative results with stories of personal life experiences. Focus group interviews were in-depth and minimally structured. Certain questions were emphasized with some participants more so than with others, and additional probing questions were interjected as needed. The interviewer recorded responses in field notes and conducted a content analysis to identify prominent themes. The following questions served as the interviewer's guide:

- When you were a new administrator in your first three years, what obstacles/challenges impacted you the most?

- In which of the following categories did you find the greatest obstacles/challenges in your first three years of leadership: reports, teacher observations/evaluations, time management, special education, parent relations, student relations, teacher relations, staff relations, curriculum/instruction, or school finance?
- Do these categories accurately represent the major challenges of novice leaders?
- How did these obstacles manifest themselves?
- How did you overcome these obstacles?
- What would you recommend for preparation programs that might help future administrators prepare for such obstacles?

**Procedure.** A mixed method was implemented to gather and analyze data. Surveys were delivered online in spring 2014 via SurveyMonkey to all graduate students who were enrolled for spring residential courses. After students arrived on campus, 8 volunteers met in a focus group.

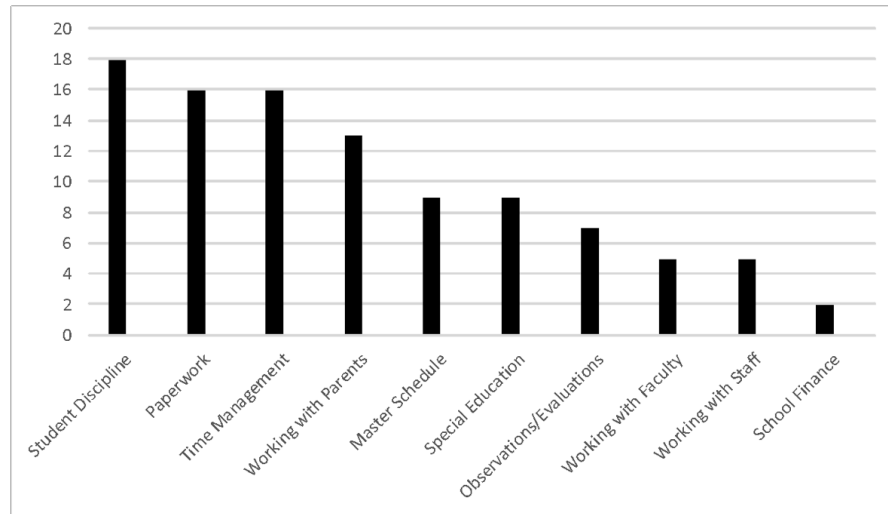
## Results

**Survey.** There were three types of data collected from the online surveys: demographic, Likert-scale, and open-ended.

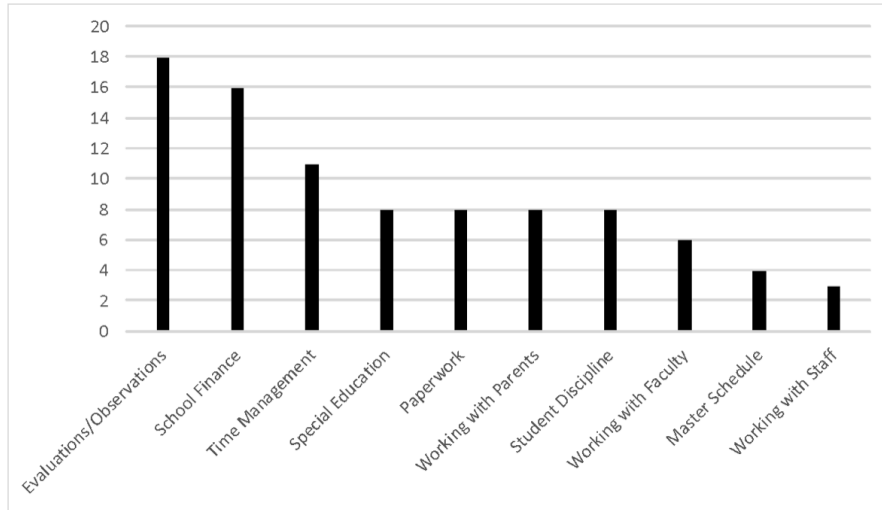
**Demographics.** Of the 159 participants, 78% held a graduate degree or higher (i.e., master's, educational specialist, or doctoral degree), while the remaining 22% held bachelor's degrees. Current assistant principals made up 21%, while 15% were principals, and the remaining 64% were identified as "Other School Level Administrator," representing current superintendents, deans, directors, specialists, and professors who formerly served as school leaders. A full one-third (53 of the 159 participants) were presently novice school leaders in their first three years of service while the remaining were beyond three years of service.

**Likert-scale results.** Novice school leaders rated student discipline as the most challenging category, with paperwork and time management tying as a close second. The category of parent relations was rated as third most challenging. (See Figure 1.) After filtering out of the data collection the novice school leaders who had three or fewer years' experience, the remaining data were analyzed for leaders with more than three years' experience. The intent was to determine

the degree to which perceptions of those challenges may change over time. Results revealed that experienced leaders (18% of them) rated evaluations/observations and school finance as their most challenging duties. Time management was a primary challenge to 16% of participants while special education proved difficult for 11%. Data showed that three of the ten categories were equally challenging for 8% of the experienced leaders: paperwork, parent relations, and student discipline. (See Figure 2.)



*Figure 1.* Perceived Challenges of Present Novice School Leaders



*Figure 2.* Experienced School Leaders Recall Challenges of Their Novice Years

***Open-ended results.*** The final online survey question was open-ended with the intent being to collect rich narrative data and to gain additional perspectives on areas not identified in the survey: “As a new administrator, what other challenges impacted you within the first three years of your leadership?”

***Novice leaders.*** Again, results were disaggregated into two sets: present novice leaders and those who had already gained three or more years’ experience. For present novice administrators, responses varied with prevailing themes relating to balance of duties and time management. A common example was that of balancing family time, graduate studies, and a new administrative position. This “balancing act” put them in a stressful situation, in which they struggled at times to know where to begin or on what they should focus.

Other recurring themes that were mentioned by multiple novice administrators involved navigating relations with other stakeholders. For example, one out of every five expressed the belief that support was lacking from superiors. They wanted to ask for assistance but were fearful this might be interpreted as a sign of weakness and might jeopardize their new position. Another issue, not offered as a survey item option but invoked by 9 participants, was that

of politics. The nature of this theme, in essence, is related to the previous one—both involve new leaders contending with individuals and structures that represent power and policy. The politics of a “small town” and the bureaucracy of a large school system were both mentioned. While they yearn to succeed at navigating the political arena and collaborating with those in authority, they are unsure how to initiate the journey.

Credibility was yet another repeated theme relating to navigating relations, this time, not only with superiors but also with faculty, parents, and students. These leaders alleged that, because they were new or worked in the school as a former teacher, others did not or would not provide respect for them in their new role. Therefore, they lacked credibility in the eyes of their colleagues. Even those who obtained leadership positions in schools other than where they were previously teachers still sensed that many teachers questioned their qualifications, background, or ability to lead.

One participant, with less than a year’s experience in her administrative role, poignantly expressed the frustrations she was presently experiencing:

My position is not typical. . . . Our campus is divided among four buildings: a pre-school, the primary education building, and the high school is in two temporary buildings as we build a main building. Pragmatically, I have no office staff. The secretaries work in the primary ed building and answer to both principals, but with only one ‘on site’ her work comes first (always). Therefore, in my rookie year (two months from my 1 year mark) I have had to manage records, emails, phone calls, budgets, announcements, appointment scheduling, . . . and then as time permits educational leadership to the faculty. [The university where I’m doing graduate work] does a great job in teaching the theoretical aspects in a properly aligned and fully resourced school. However, anyone who enters a similar situation will find they are unprepared for the fire inspections, lock-down drills, attendance audits, and the filing of standardized tests (not to mention ordering these items). Likewise, they will find they are unprepared for the best courses of action to structure their time to ensure faculty are developed. Finally, there is no module on how to construct a master schedule. Within the

educational leadership track, there needs to be panel discussions with veteran leaders who have overcome these challenges in private schools. Finally, I have found the greatest challenge is that new teachers are unprepared to talk with parents. Leadership training mandates a conflict resolution course, but teaching and learning does not . . . . Why wait so late? Most of my issues stemmed from poor communication skills in young teachers. The conveying of planned lessons is sufficient to great, but the unplanned talking to students or parents is from unsatisfactory to terrible, because they cannot recognize and prevent conflict points. There is not enough professional development days to role play, emphasize, and solidify this needed area, when so many others aspects need attention.

Her raw frustration can be sensed as she affirms some of the themes identified by both the survey results and the open-ended responses of other novice leaders.

*Experienced leaders.* The identified themes varied somewhat for leaders with three or more years of experience, but the prominent issue remained the same—that of time management and balancing personal lives. As indicated in the sample description, all of the participants are currently serving in school leadership roles and are enrolled in a graduate leadership degree program, suggesting that as a group, they have many time-consuming responsibilities. Interestingly, the second most recurring theme among novices is completely absent from the narrative of experienced leaders, which involves lack of support from superiors. This could indicate that in years past there may have been more support from superiors or that—as leaders gain more experience and independence—they look back at other issues as having been more challenging.

The subsequent two themes shared relatively the same prominence among experienced leaders as they did with novices: navigating politics and gaining a sense of credibility. Experienced leaders expounded more on specific political hurdles with school boards, teachers, and parents, and—regarding these same populations—experienced leaders voiced that they wished they had been more successful in their earlier years in developing credibility more quickly with stakeholders. A theme not occurring at all among present novices but noted by five experienced leaders was that of

adjusting to the culture of a new school as its leader. This phenomenon may be explained by the value more seasoned leaders have developed for factors inherent in a campus culture. As they look back on their novice years, seasoned leaders may realize how more effective they could have been and how much credibility they could have earned had they become more proficient in understanding the culture of the school environment they were charged to lead.

Further comparison of novices to experienced leaders demonstrates the following differences. When approaching the open-ended questions, present novices and experienced leaders alike identified time management and balance as the most challenging. The remaining areas of focus for new leaders and experienced leaders were quite similar in nature, with the items only varying by a few participants. Both viewed politics and credibility as major concerns. The remaining items of conflict for novice leaders were more task-oriented items, such as cultivating a cohesive school climate, being micromanaged, and managing parental involvement. For experienced leaders, however, the tasks appeared to consist of more daunting duties, such as accreditation, management of budget and staff, and professional development opportunities.

***Focus group results.*** Qualitative data were collected by two means—written responses from the 159 online survey participants and verbal responses from a focus group interview of 8 volunteers. An analysis of the focus group responses revealed the following clusters of results:

***Themes.*** The focus group facilitator asked, “When you were a new administrator in your first three years, what obstacles/challenges impacted you the most?” Below are themes and clustered examples that the group centered on in their responses:

- *Personal style:* attempts to gain self-confidence, search for personal leadership style, prioritizing “battles to fight,” an understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their leadership style
- *Faculty relations:* teacher buy-in, problem/negative teachers, unrealistic faculty expectations of new administration, identification of key players, and a desire to be liked by their faculty
- *Policy and legal issues:* overwhelming myriad of rules and regulations, school and community politics, liability,

IEPs/special education, employment law, and the fear of inadvertent mistakes leading to legal or other employment consequences

- *Application of theory to practice*: difficulties of applying pre-service training (e.g., content and theoretical knowledge) to the realities of organizational management and leadership, no practical leadership experience, insufficient hands-on training, and the overall concept of “knowing what works”
- *Time and task management*: e-mail management, budget process, prioritization of responsibilities, balancing personal and professional responsibilities.
- *Need for support*: lack of a mentor, insufficient induction program, unclear expectations without proper support, and feelings of conflicting expectations from various and/or individuals

Participants were then asked, “In which of the previously identified categories did you find the greatest obstacles/challenges in your first three years of leadership?” Paperwork was by far the most agreed-upon category as participants spoke of documentation and report writing as their greatest challenges. Furthermore, several mentioned that electronic reports, communication, and documentation had actually made their jobs even more stressful as information was required to be managed more quickly. Interestingly, a comparison of the focus group responses to Likert-scale data reveals that present novice administrators rate paperwork among the top most challenging duties, but experienced administrators did not recall paperwork being such a challenge in their early administrative careers. This may be due to the growing prevalence and increasing demand that digital information places on novice administrators or that—looking back—experienced administrators recall other issues as having impacted them to a greater degree.

Other primary challenges included special education and parent relations. Special education reporting was perceived as especially time-consuming—a task for which novice administrators felt inadequate and unprepared. Management of special education programs has grown into a significant leadership responsibility in recent decades, but many school leaders have little or no experience in this area. Regarding parent relations, participants described the process of adjusting to and dealing with the amount of parent



complaints and negative comments. The unplanned and unexpected nature of parent complaints was also mentioned as a challenge.

Surprisingly and contrary to findings in the literature, there were some challenges that the focus group participants did not rate as being among their most pressing obstacles in the first three years of school leadership. Student discipline was one of those areas. Although most agreed that student discipline consumed a substantial portion of their time, it was one of the rare duties for which they had a clearer expectation, especially having been on the faculty side of collaborating with administration on student discipline issues in the past. Most participants felt comfortable addressing discipline because they sensed that it had been an area of strength for them as a classroom teacher. Another issue the focus group unexpectedly deemphasized was faculty relations. Indeed, dealing with problem teachers was noted as a difficult aspect of their new job, but specifically, it was conducting observations and evaluations that they perceived as more difficult because of the amount of time required, the difficulty to schedule, and the post-observation conferences with teachers who had not performed satisfactorily. This challenge also tied into the issue of earning credibility as teachers may be reluctant to accept criticism from novice leaders.

The facilitator asked the group how the realization manifested itself that a particular challenge was daunting and how they attempted to overcome those challenges. "I knew it was a particular challenge," one participant said, "when the stress just became such that I didn't think I could tolerate it if it got much worse."

"I could tell that the learning curve," another stated, "was going much slower in some areas than in others."

Yet another participant shared, "It was obvious I was struggling with a particular duty when I felt this desperate need to cry 'help!' I began to look for help anywhere I could find it: friends, other principals, books, conferences. You name it!"

Common responses explained, if not assigned a mentor, how they sought one out. Several expressed the importance of informal mentors, whether they had a formal mentor or not. They spoke of learning over time how to prioritize better and how some challenges simply diminished as they gained more experience. Trial-and-error became their teacher, and they learned to accept what they knew and did not know and what they could and could not do well. The phrase

“You don’t know what you don’t know” was used by several participants to describe the early stages of the learning process.

***Focus group summary.*** Throughout the focus group conversations, the group seemed to be in agreement in regard to most of the topics. There was very little disagreement about the challenges, although there were varying degrees of difficulty based on individual experience. Most of the participants expressed some level of frustration with the challenges they faced as novice administrators and most of them expressed some success in learning to deal with those challenges. Most of the participants mentioned that they did not feel adequate or well prepared when they entered their leadership roles, but also mentioned that those feelings seem normal for new leaders. Although there were some suggestions on how leadership programs might better prepare future leaders, they also seemed resigned to the idea that on-the-job training is the most effective way to gain leadership experience. There did seem to be a very strong sentiment that mentors were a key ingredient in the support of new school leaders. Several participants discussed the benefits of being involved in a mentoring program.

Another apparent theme through focus group conversations was the importance of clear communication and expectations from the community and school district. Several participants mentioned the challenge of learning the political side of school leadership and determining what was expected by their supervisors. Some participants mentioned the shift from confidence in their teaching abilities and expertise in their subject matter to a lack of confidence in managing areas outside of their content background.

One other interesting theme that seemed to arouse emotions in all of the participants was the use of technology school leadership. It was mentioned that many of the resources made available to administrators to help them perform their duties and responsibilities in a more efficient manner have actually hindered and complicated their leadership abilities. For example, the availability of e-mail and cell phones has made quick communication with stakeholders much easier but has made their overall jobs as school leaders more difficult. Participants mentioned that the rapidly increasing number of e-mails they receive have made communication more difficult and less personal. Furthermore, because of the convenience of using e-mail for communication, e-mails are sent more often and are often

misunderstood or even unnecessary. Technology has also made it difficult for school leaders to separate their professional and personal lives. Many said they feel the need to respond to electronic communication from home or during nonworking hours just to keep up with the demands of the job.

Another perceived benefit of technology that was mentioned is the immediate nature of information. Because information, such as reports and forms, can now be completed and sent electronically, entities requesting this information often expect it much more quickly than when it was completed via hard copy. Cell phones have also complicated the life of the school leader as many of them felt that they were “on call” at all times. Constant availability of school leaders through e-mail, cell phone, and text has added overall stress to school leaders’ lives.

In addition to the time management challenges addressed above, secondary principals mentioned the additional responsibilities of attending extracurricular activities. High school administrators mentioned that there is some activity at their school almost every afternoon and evening. Most of the secondary school leaders felt like there were not enough administrators to go around, which sometimes meant working late into the evening multiple times a week. Furthermore, support from home was helpful in reducing stress from long hours.

## **Discussion**

The results of this study provide a description of the challenges facing novice school leaders. It noted differences between those who were presently in the throes of their induction phase and those who had gained at least three years’ experience. It also compared responses from a focus group to those from a written Likert-scale survey that included an open-ended question. Overall, there were differences in the ratings given to various challenges and in the emphasis placed on those challenges. The prevailing thread throughout, however, was the need for support. It was specifically indicated that support was desired from supervisors of novice leaders. However, as focus group members voiced their strategies for overcoming the challenges, the support they eventually realized seemed to be more organic. It came more from informal sources of support than formal and from the

resolution of personal reflective processes than prescriptive procedures. Whether formal or informal, this current study supports the findings in a study conducted by Boerema (2011) indicated that new leaders need someone they can go to at any time with questions, concerns, or to serve as a sounding board.

What then are the implications for the curriculum of graduate educational leadership programs to prepare future principals for the realities of their jobs—especially if the answer is organic support as mentioned earlier? It may be that this support is what Joanne Rooney (2008) suggested for pre-service, induction/orientation programs, and continued in-service. Her recommendations align with the results of this present study both from present novice principals and from experienced principals reflecting on their induction years. It would be wise if—long before candidates for educational leadership were hired for a position—that they were coached to build supportive relationships that will prove beneficial in those induction years, particularly with a role model and mentor. “Perhaps,” declared Rooney, “successful principals realize that power, control, and information do not flow from the top down, but move through the more horizontal and complex connections that exist in any human community” (p. 85). These complex connections may just provide the support novice leaders need, more so even than a topically-oriented systematic induction program.

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# Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize: The Role of Fieldwork in Preparing Social Justice School Leaders in a Public University Program

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## Abstract

*This article provides a discussion of how fieldwork can enhance the preparation of school leaders, and how this emphasis on practical, experiential learning can expose students to the wide array of challenges facing public schools. We discuss ways to transform traditional and procedural fieldwork objectives of our students to those that address social justice leadership.*

**Keywords:** *leadership preparation, fieldwork, social justice leadership*

A significant goal of public education is to maintain a “common good,” that is, to provide a resource available to all, one that empowers and enables individuals to craft a quality of life that they see appropriate. This belief that the goal of public education is to improve the lives of all students and families lies, in our view, at the core of common good. School leaders have been traditionally prepared through public university-sponsored programs. This paper discusses how leadership programs can maintain a focus on the broader role of education through empowering fieldwork experiences. Data for this discussion were drawn from educational leadership candidates in a public university that has worked to couple theory and practice in preparing future school leaders guided by social justice epistemologies.

## The Primacy of School Leadership

There is strong consensus from the field that school leaders are a critical factor in the success or failure of a school, and that these

individuals make a significant impact on student performance (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Moreover, the knowledge base confirms that in terms of *within-school* factors related to student achievement, school leadership quality is second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teacher instruction (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). As a result, it is critical to understand best practices for school leader preparation and to explore the variety of ways that school leaders are acculturated. Leadership preparation becomes more important with the knowledge that schools with low student achievement are often led by under-prepared leaders (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Horng, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009). Further, low-income students, students of color, and low-performing students are more likely to attend schools led by novice or temporary principals, those who do not hold an advanced (master's) degree and those who have attended "less selective" colleges (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010). Thus, how to improve the quality of leaders who can successfully lead under-performing schools is a pressing issue for all leadership preparation programs.

### **The Fieldwork Experience**

Most educational administration programs require some form of practical experience for candidates pursuing licensure as an administrator, and this practical experience is typically an extension of a certain period of time of professional work experience. The demonstration of abilities and knowledge is critical for those studying to become educational administrators, and this demonstration is often rooted in the concept of experiential learning. Experiential learning is a process of teaching and learning where students experience in real world situations the problems, processes, and opportunities they will face once they are in permanent positions. Experiential learning is noted as being difficult to assess, although the rise in the use of portfolios has become more common and allows for the presentation of artifacts that illustrate student work. Additionally, experiential learning often requires a knowledgeable individual to have some oversight or mentoring of the student; someone at the worksite who can assess and give feedback as different scenarios arise. This can



mean that either the institution uses core faculty members to do this supervision or must rely on clinical or adjunct faculty or on-site supervisors.

Although there is considerable literature on the fieldwork experience in teacher and administrator preparation, programs have been critiqued for their lack of attention to students' on-site experiences (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Barton & Cox, 2012). To explore the fieldwork component of our program, a public institution representative of many in the U.S., we examined fieldwork objectives from 31 current and former students' portfolios. Our intention was a form of "self-study" whereby we would gather information about the fieldwork experience and propose recommendations to our program.

Fieldwork objectives are developed using a variety of resources. Upon entrance into the program our students complete a self-assessment on leadership that helps them develop fieldwork goals and objectives. Additionally, the fieldwork goals and objectives are developed to meet licensure requirements such as the California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs). Students are supported by fieldwork advisors in developing goals and objectives grounded in the daily routines found in a school or district, with the intent to give students experiential learning experiences. Moreover, because our program emphasizes a social justice leadership approach, we expect that the fieldwork objectives of our candidates address issues of social justice leadership.

In the next section we provide a synthesis of candidates' fieldwork portfolios. We present examples of the fieldwork objectives and discuss ways that we might have better supported students in broadening their view of leadership towards advocacy and social justice perspectives.

**Instructional leadership.** Many of our candidates included fieldwork objectives related to instructional leadership in their portfolios. Specific fieldwork objectives included.

- *Conduct a walkthrough with an elementary school principal*
- *Learn all of the different sub-groups represented in student data*
- *Conduct a walkthrough with a school principal at a school that is*

*at least 20% ethnically different than my own*

While these fieldwork objectives address areas related to instructional leadership, we wondered how we might have supported our students to think critically about instructional leadership in their school's local context. Many of the students will lead schools with large numbers of English Language learners, and come from homes with a diverse cultural heritage. They will need to have extensive knowledge about effective pedagogical approaches to leadership in schools with English Learners, as well as understand cultural differences in family support of education. This confirms the idea that instructional leadership is optimized when leaders understand and are responsive to the context of their schools (Leithwood, Harris, Hopkins, 2008). A recommendation to our program may be to discuss ways that advisors can support students to develop fieldwork objectives that reflect a pedagogical approach that takes into account the culture and context of leading schools with English Learners.

**Systems leadership.** Fieldwork objectives related to “systems leadership” were included in the portfolios through topics such as school law, staff handbooks, federal, state, and local requirements and regulations. Examples included,

- *Research the rates of school discipline and suspensions at my school*
- *Review the Staff Handbook*
- *Attend a School Board meeting*

Many of the fieldwork objectives reviewed in this section were traditional and procedural in nature. Students' most likely developed them by following the CAPE standards, results from their self-assessment and/or suggestions from their fieldwork advisors. Missing from these objectives was attention to social justice perspectives. A recommendation to our program is to consider ways to support students to transform traditional fieldwork objectives into those that reflect a social justice leadership approach. For example, fieldwork advisors can support leadership candidates in interrogating the opportunity structures and systems in schools that do or do not promote a positive culture and climate for students and staff.

**Professional learning and growth leadership.** The fieldwork objectives in this area addressed topics such as building

professional learning communities and planning professional development. Examples included,

- *Assess school Professional Learning Community (PLC) needs*

These objectives could be strengthened with attention to effective professional development for teachers of students of color and/or ability. The student might be asked to review the ethnicity of teachers, administrators and students, as well as to explore disability accommodations and the physical school facility for disability access.

**Visionary Leadership.** Although students included visionary leadership in their portfolio, the fieldwork objectives did not address how to *implement* a vision. This omission may reflect the difficulty of leadership students to make the transition from a teacher-centered perspective to a school leader-centered perspective. For example,

- *Shadowing a school principal*
- *Help implement the school vision*

Creating a vision is one of the most difficult tasks an educational leader can undertake, and focusing on interactions following a shadowing episode can optimize the simple act of silently following a principal or an assistant principal. Particular attention can be focused on the process of interactions with constituents such as parents, district personnel, teachers, other administrators, and students.

**School improvement leadership.** Another part of the fieldwork portfolio that we examined focused on school improvement efforts and accreditation, as in the following,

- *To learn about a school's Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) review process*
- *To facilitate the WASC Focus Group Meetings and encourage participation of focus group members in the creation of the WASC report.*

The fieldwork objectives in this section did not address the larger issue of school improvement and the role of the school leader. Particular attention to these fieldwork experiences should be directed at understanding the larger meaning of accreditation and trying to understand the overall process, while simultaneously becoming familiar with how others have faced the challenges of assessment and reporting. Mendoza-Reis and Flores (2014) remind us that school

improvement at the institutional level requires school leaders to “engage in an advocacy leadership that challenges the existing status quo and the role that schools play in maintaining a system of disproportionate school failure among non-dominant students, and in particular, English learners. When school leaders recognize the system of inequality, they are better able to support their staff in addressing the inequalities through a responsive pedagogy. School leaders must be prepared to examine and interrupt all school and district policies that lead to institutional inequities” (p. 195).

**Community leadership.** The last category was Community Leadership. Included in these fieldwork objectives were,

- *To have a better understanding of the different roles parents can have within the school environment*
- *Become a representative on the English Learners Advisory Committee.*

An interesting observation was that it was the students who teach in high-poverty schools who tended to include fieldwork objectives about community leadership. In our leadership classes, students are required to read articles on different ways of thinking about the home/school connection and trying to understand different cultural heritages and values that impact both the student and the family. They are introduced to the *funds of knowledge* research, and are challenged to reflect how their actions as a leader set a tone for the acceptance of all learners. A recommendation to our program may be to require that students discuss multiple ways that community can be defined, both within the school and within the school district.

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

In this program, candidates are taught about systemic inequities and the ways that school leaders can address them. Candidates are taught to ‘guide their actions from an explicit and solid equity agenda (Arriaza & Mendoza-Reis, 2006). This was reflected in the fieldwork objectives that included increasing awareness about diverse students at their schools (ethnicity, poverty and/or special education) and interrogating inequitable systems such as analyzing the rates of retention, discipline and suspensions or finding ways to increase parental involvement in both curriculum and school governance. It was noted, however, that most of these types of fieldwork objectives

were from candidates who taught in less affluent schools. The fieldwork objectives from the candidates who taught in highly affluent schools tended to focus on learning policies and procedures in managing schools. While these are important, candidates will be better prepared if their fieldwork objectives are focused on analyzing policies and procedures through the lens of social justice leadership.

There were a high number of fieldwork objectives in the category of Instructional Leadership. One might say this is to be expected, as our candidates tend to be teacher leaders with extensive knowledge about teaching and learning. Nonetheless, in closer analysis, very few mentioned teaching and learning in the context of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Our program, as well as others, must consider monitoring and mediating fieldwork objectives as necessary to ensure that our candidates are prepared to be social justice leaders.

The purpose of this discussion was not only to highlight one institution's use of fieldwork objectives, but also to provide some reflection on these objectives as students consider where to enroll in degree programs and what they might look for in terms of experiences. As private educational competitors become increasingly common, it is important for students, and for employers of these students, to consider the experiential elements of what students are learning, and not simply whether they have completed a credential. Increasingly, the content of degrees and educational programs needs to be the focus of employment rather than focusing on the "faster and quicker" mentality that has secured a stronghold among the mindset of so many learners today.

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# Administrative Coaching Practices: Content, Personalization, and Support

Christine A. Hayashi

## Abstract

*This study surveys educators who have completed, or are in their second year of, an administrative coaching program that results in a California Clear Administrative Credential, also known as Tier II. The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions of these educators regarding whether current practices in administrative coaching programs are providing sufficient content, personalization, and support to new administrators. A survey was sent to attendees and graduates from school districts in central and southern California. This paper includes the results of that survey and an analysis of the responses to determine best practices for institutions of higher education that may be considering offering a Tier II program to interested educators within their local community.*

Most school districts provide some professional development, and many assign a district administrator to act as a mentor, to the newly hired school principal or administrator. In most cases, to even get to the interview table, new principals must be in possession of a preliminary administrative credential that represents hours of time spent in a principal preparation program or perhaps successful passage of a state exam. With all of this knowledge and support, why are so many school districts now seeking administrative coaching services from local colleges and universities?

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing has implemented a Clear Administrative Services Credential program that includes a second tier to the credentialing process. This Tier II program requires candidates to participate in two years of coaching rather than previous models of a clear credential that have used one or two semesters of coursework. While a number of county offices of education and some institutions of higher education are now offering

Tier II coaching programs to interested candidates (CCTC, 2015), many universities have not implemented a new Tier II program on their campuses due to the complexity in providing the coaching requirements within the restrictions of the semester framework. As more school districts seek venues for their newly minted administrators to complete the Tier II requirement, more universities are looking into the possibility of becoming Tier II providers.

Why add a coaching component to administrator preparation? Coaching and the importance of induction for new administrators has been discussed broadly for a number of years (Fullan, 2001; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Reeves, 2009). While some of the literature looks at the differences between mentoring and coaching, providing arguments for either or both (Rich & Jackson, 2005; Smith, 2007; Weingartner, 2009), there have been a few studies that probe the practice and efficacy of coaching in a more in-depth manner and that have become part of the focus of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) as they seek to provide a meaningful process for educators moving into administrative positions within the state (Bickman, et.al, 2012; Darling-Hammond, et.al, 2010; Davis, Darling-Hammond, et.al, 2012).

In the process of adopting the new program standards for the Administrative Services Credential Clear Induction program, the CCTC stated that the “design of the program is based on a sound rationale informed by theory and research, is primarily coaching-based, and includes personalized learning” (CCTC, 2014). (See Appendix A). In sum, the CCTC has identified leadership coaching as the vehicle to bring personalized instruction to candidates while addressing the new administrative standards.

The program design provides multiple opportunities for candidates to demonstrate growth and competence in the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL). The CPSELs and the California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPE)s are based on the standards adopted in 2003 for the Preliminary Administrative Credential that were, in turn, based on the national Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (CCTC, 2003; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). In 2015, with the revisions to both the preliminary and clear administrative credentials, the CPSELs are now an integral part of the California Clear Administrative Credential, Tier II (CCTC, 2014).

Additionally, the program has been designed to be primarily coaching-based, with the requirement of two mandatory years of coaching for each Tier II candidate (CCTC, 2014).

### **Review of the Literature**

What, exactly, does the CCTC mean by “coaching”? And does coaching include the idea of “personalized learning” (CCTC, 2014)? Quoted in the New Teacher Center’s *Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success*, Robert Hargrove says that coaching requires the coach to “see what others may not see through the high quality of his or her attention or listening; [be] in the position to step back from the situation so that they have enough distance from it to get some perspective; help people see the difference between their intentions and their thinking or actions; and help people cut through patterns of self-deception caused by defensive thinking and behavior” (New Teacher Center, 2009, p.1-9). Hargrove describes coaching as a way to “help people achieve something seemingly impossible and make a difference in their world” by pushing them toward extraordinary results, and strongly argues that coaching is “the fastest, most powerful way to develop leaders” (Hargrove, 2008, p. x-xi).

According to Bloom, Castagna, Moir, and Warren (2005), “effective leadership coaching incorporates a number of key elements that include: A relationship based upon trust and permission, a coach who serves as a different observer of the coachee and the context, a recognition of programs and needs as valued learning opportunities, a coach who is able to apply a variety of coaching skills and strategies as appropriate to the context and needs of the coachee, a coach who can provide emotional support to the coachee, a fundamental commitment to organizational goals as agreed to by the coach and the coachee, and a coach who appropriately pushes the coachee to attain them” (p. 7-9).

In addition, the same study explains what coaching *is not*: “Coaching is not training ..Coaching is not mentoring, although effective mentors use coaching skills and strategies...Coaching is not supervision, but effective supervisors coach a lot ... Coaching is not therapy...” (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005, p.9-10).

Perhaps a more succinct definition describes leadership coaching as “an individualized, situational, goal-oriented, professional

relationship focused upon the development of leadership which takes into account the circumstances and the most essential challenges of today and develops the ability of the coachee to successfully master the challenges of tomorrow” (Bossi, 2008, p. 31).

But why do we need administrative coaching? According to some studies, the need arises from the limitations inherent in traditional principal preparation programs (Bloom, et al., 2003). Principal preparation programs, similar to teacher preparation programs, can provide lots of information, theories, and case studies (Breux & Wong, 2003), but leadership coaching provides a vehicle for personalized discussion and decision-making that immediately have an effect on the day to day operation of the school, effectiveness of the principal, and achievement of the students (Bossi, 2007; Killion, 2002).

What happens during coaching? One method involves a combination of facilitative coaching – the coach provokes the coachee to reexamine a situation and leads the coachee to clarify his/her own thinking – and instructional coaching, in which a coach uses his/her experience and knowledge to give direct feedback and makes suggestions when the coachee does not have the skills and then specifically asks the coach for instruction (New Teacher Center, 2009). Another explanation involves first establishing trust and confidentiality between coach and coachee through a process of getting to know each other, followed by goal setting, a discussion of the coachee’s situations and issues, the coach pushing the coachee with probing questions, and then a sharing of knowledge and experience by the coach, infused with best practices and inspiration (Wise, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the rationale for leadership coaching from the state of California is that the design of the new program is “informed by theory and research, is primarily coaching-based, and includes personalized learning” (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2013). What do they mean by personalized learning? In examining the theory of adult learning, which embraces personalized learning, one finds: that an adult must be emotionally comfortable with the learning situation; adult learning is voluntary; adults want to learn to solve or address a particular problem; adults are more satisfied with their learning if it applies to their everyday experiences; and adults bring a wealth of background differences and

experiences to learning (Draves, 2014). Conversely, while adults must be emotionally comfortable with the learning situation, they must also be taken out of their comfort zone to get new information and perspectives they're not used to; in formats, such as coaching, that they're not used to; engaging with it in new ways; and at a more deliberate pace (Spalding, 2014). To be truly personalized, the instructor must also interact on an individual basis with the adult learner, taking into consideration the type of school, school district, student population, and specifics of the situation in which the adult learner exists.

Recent studies have also looked more closely at coaching competencies and strategies, in other words, those abilities, behaviors, and skills, such as building strong relationships and effective communication skills, that lead to the most successful results in the coach/coachee relationship (Wise & Hammack, 2011; Wise 2010). Best practices gleaned from these studies include the importance of tying the behaviors and practices of the coachee with increased student achievement (Wise & Hammock, 2011).

Our current study is specific to the new California Commission on Teacher Credentialing standards for administrators and the two year coaching component of the new Tier II requirements for a clear administrative credential.

Our research seeks to answer these questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of adult candidates who have completed an administrative coaching program, regarding the content of the program?
- 2) What are the perceptions of adult candidates who have completed an administrative coaching program, regarding personalization of the content to their current employment environment?
- 3) What are the perceptions of adult candidates who have completed an administrative coaching program, regarding the quality of the relationship between the candidate and the support provider?

## **Method**

A survey was sent electronically to new administrators who were currently enrolled in the second year of or who had graduated from a

Tier II administrative coaching program. To identify subjects, researchers contacted sitting administrators they knew had participated in a Tier II program, professors at other universities, and contacts within several California county education offices, seeking email lists of Tier II administrative coaching program graduates and second year participants. A blind survey was sent to the 67 collected email addresses, and 30 persons responded, resulting in a response rate of 45%. The majority of subjects were participants from two county Tier II programs, one in southern California and one in central California, and represented over 25 school districts and other local education agencies.

The subjects were surveyed to determine the coaches' perceptions on whether the program content was comprehensive, the personalization of the program to their own district and school site needs was sufficient, whether they were able to establish a relationship with a coach that provided the support they felt was necessary to improve their decision-making skills and ability to resolve challenging school site issues, and whether their employer provided sufficient resources and financial support. The survey was not intended to target any one Tier II program or provider, or to criticize any existing programs, but to assess the perceptions of the attendees regarding several criteria in order to make informed decisions about what new administrators are looking for in the administrative coaching process as we develop a new program. The data was collected on an online survey provider.

## **Results**

Tables 1 through 3 portray the demographics of the survey participants. The respondents were each asked to provide their age, gender, when they completed or will complete the Tier II coaching program, their years in PK-12 education, and the number of years they have been in an administrative position. Additionally, respondents were asked the level of the school to which they are currently assigned, the type of school (i.e. public, charter, or private), and their current position in that school or office of education.

Of the thirty subjects, over sixty percent were between the ages of thirty-five to fifty-four, with the higher percentage at 36.7 in the 35 to 44 age range. The gender of respondents was very close in number,

with 53% female and 47% male. Most of the respondents have been in PK-12 education for 11-20 years and most have been in their administrative position for less than five years. This was expected as new administrators must complete the Tier II credential requirement within the first five years of being appointed to an administrative position.

While almost all of the subjects work in public education, the level of school where each works is quite diverse, with 16.5% in elementary education, 26.7% in middle school, 20% in high school, and the other 37% in district and county offices, as well as in other positions.

The majority of the respondents finished their Tier II program in the spring 2015. Originally, the researchers were going to limit the study to those persons who had completed the program, but due to the limited amount of time that the Tier II coaching requirement has been in place, we were concerned that we would not get a sufficient number of subjects. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents have completed the program, with 31% set to complete it within the upcoming year. We specifically omitted anyone who was just starting a program or was in the first year of a program.

Table 1  
*Age, Gender, Tier II Completion*

Age	% Respondents
21 to 34	16.7%
35 to 44	36.7%
45 to 54	26.7%
55 or older	20.0%
Gender	% Respondents
Female	53.3%
Male	46.7%
Complete Tier II	% Respondents
2013	10.3%
2014	6.9%
2015 Spring	51.7%
2015 Fall	10.3%
2016	20.6%

Table 2  
*Years in PK-12: Administration*

Year in PK-12	% Respondents
Less than 5 years	0%
5 to 10 years	16.7%
11 to 20 years	63.3%
21-30 years	16.7%
31 or more years	3.3%
Not Applicable	0%
Years in Administration	% Respondents
Less than 5 years	86.7%
5 to 10 years	6.7%
11 or more years	0%
Not Applicable	0%



Table 3  
*Level & Type of School, Position*

Level of Assignment	% Respondents
Preschool	0%
Elementary School	16.5%
Middle School	26.7%
High School	20%
Adult School	3.3%
School District Office	13.3%
County Office of Ed	6.7%
Other	13.3%
Type of School	% Respondents
Public	93.3%
Public Charter	3.3%
Private	3.3%
Current Position	% Respondents
Dean	0%
Asst. Prin./Asst. Dir.	43.3%
Vice Prin./Vice Dir.	13.3%
Principal/Director	16.7%
District Office	13.3%
Other	13.3%

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the collected data in the three areas of study: Was the Tier II program perceived to have provided the content, personalization, and support necessary for success as a new administrator? The eleven questions regarding perception of the Tier II programs attended by the subjects were presented using a Likert scale model to determine degrees of satisfaction. Choices for participants were strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Tables 4 and 5 separate those data into sections for easier analysis.

In table 4, a majority of participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that the Administrative Credential Tier II program provided them with:

1. The knowledge, skills and experiences to deal with the day-to-day work responsibilities associated with my position.
2. Assistance in developing professional knowledge and skills in time management, staff supervision, and budget management.
3. A combination of content based instruction, classroom discussion, case study examples, and guest speakers.
4. Knowledge of curriculum design and implementation, curriculum evaluation, and the leadership skills to monitor program success in order to maintain high expectations for all students.
5. The course curriculum and assigned coach that were best able to guide me in making decisions appropriate to the administrative issues of my school and district.
6. Sufficient and useful feedback from the coaching experience to improve my decision-making skills and ability to deal with challenging situations.
7. The opportunity to apply my own administrative experiences and job-related responsibilities to the course content.

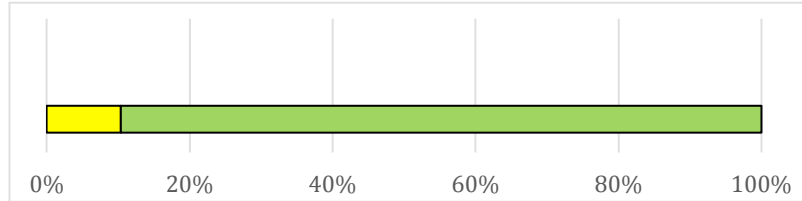
However, the questions regarding support from the school district were less positive. In particular, 67% of respondents disagree that their program provided a financial aid option.

8. Additional support from my school district through program-district dialogue, joint workshops, and coaches-administrators meetings.
9. A financially affordable program.
10. An option of having the school district pay for the program.
11. A financial aid option.

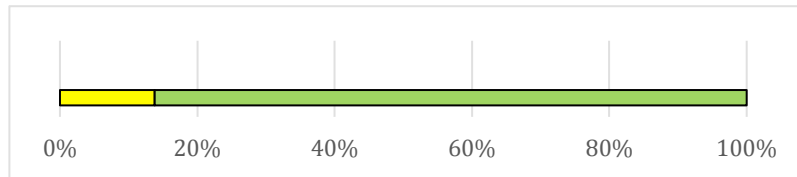
Table 4  
*Percentage of disagreement/agreement. The Administrative  
 Credential Tier II Program provided me with:*

Disagree Agree

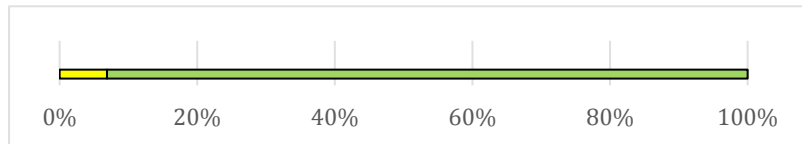
1 **The knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to deal with the day-to-day work responsibilities associated with my position.**



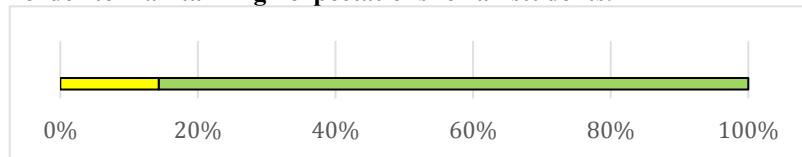
2 **Assistance in developing professional knowledge and skills in time management, staff supervision, and budget management.**



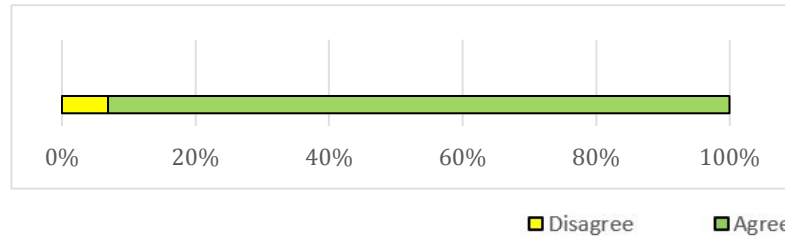
3 **A combination of content based instruction, classroom discussion, case study examples, and guest speakers.**



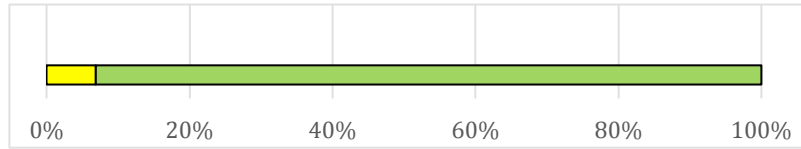
4 **Knowledge of curriculum design and implementation, curriculum evaluation, and the leadership skills to monitor program success in order to maintain high expectations for all students.**



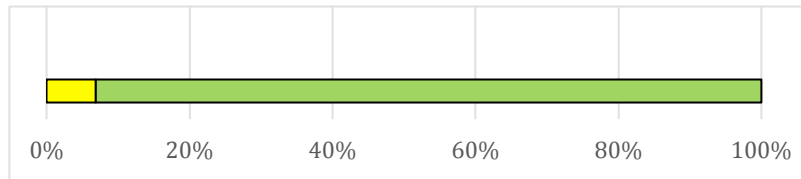
- 5 **The course curriculum and assigned coach that were best able to guide me in making decisions appropriate to the administrative issues of my school and district.**



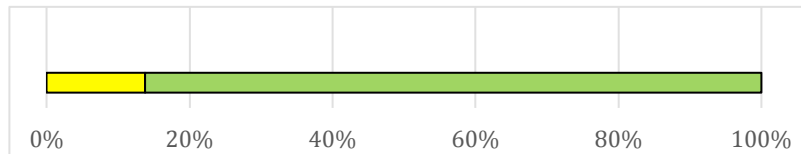
- 6 **Sufficient and useful feedback from the coaching experience to improve my decision-making skills and ability to deal with challenging situations.**



- 7 **The opportunity to apply my own administrative experiences and job-related responsibilities to the course content.**

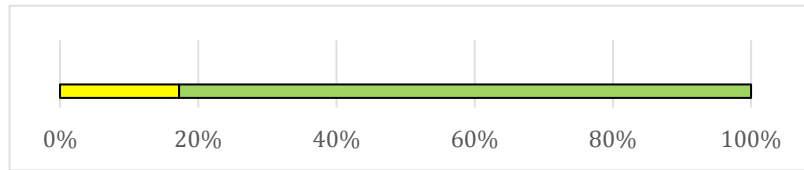


- 8 **Additional support from my school district through program-district dialogue, joint workshops, and coaches-administrators meetings.**



**A financially affordable program.**

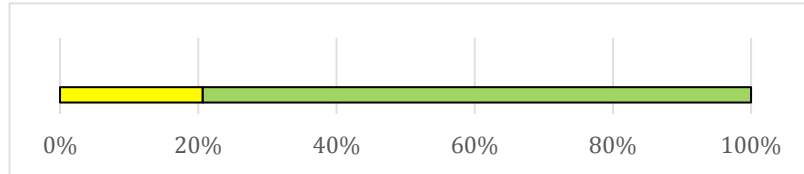
9



10

**An option of having the school district pay for the program.**

NOTE: ALL the disagrees here are STRONGLY DISAGREE



11

**A financial aid option.**

Disagree Agree

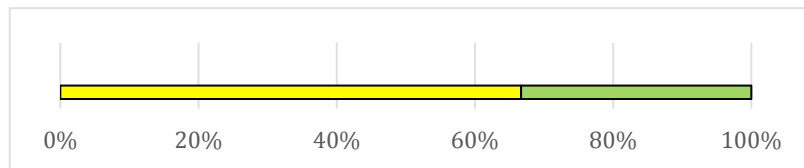


Table 5 breaks down the data in the Likert results for each of the 11 areas covered in the survey. Of note are the areas in which participants chose “somewhat agree.” While the majority of respondents replied in the agree spectrum on most questions, the breakdown shows a more varied degree of satisfaction with the programs.

Table 5  
*Likert Percentage Results for each of the 11 Questions*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20.69	37.04
Disagree	6.9	6.9	3.45	3.57	3.45	0	0	10.34	6.9	0	25.93
Somewhat Disagree	3.45	6.9	3.45	10.71	3.45	0	6.9	3.45	10.34	0	3.70
Somewhat Agree	34.48	37.93	17.24	42.86	17.24	27.59	17.24	24.14	34.48	0	22.22
Agree	48.28	41.38	58.62	32.14	51.72	51.72	51.72	55.17	31.03	44.83	11.11
Strongly Agree	6.9	6.9	17.24	10.71	24.14	20.69	24.14	6.90	17.24	34.48	0

In particular, while the most common response for eight of the queries was “agree”, in three instances, “somewhat agree” was the higher response. One example is: (4) the Administrative Credential Tier II program provided me with knowledge of curriculum design and implementation, curriculum evaluation, and the leadership skills to monitor program success in order to maintain high expectations for all students. While the combined “somewhat agree,” “agree,” and “strongly agree” responses on their own show a very strong overall positive, the high “somewhat agree” combined with a higher than average “somewhat disagree” percentage when compared with most other questions, would make this an area of closer investigation. Similarly, in question (9): the Administrative Credential Tier II program provided me with a financially affordable program, the responses in agreement with the statement are a much higher percentage than those in disagreement, but the “somewhat agree” and “somewhat disagree” responses together account for approximately 45% of the responses, making this another area of interest.

### Discussion

In addition to the areas of interest identified in the illustrated tables above, there were a number of comments made by respondents that may further help clarify their perceptions of the programs. While the overall results of this survey show a very strong positive perception of the Tier II programs attended by the respondents, these comments show areas where a program still in the design stage might take note.

The first four questions asked for perceptions of the participants in new Tier II programs regarding the course content of the program they attended. Sample comments were: “I feel that I learned far more on the job than through the program. One thing that the program did that I appreciated, was having us work through the Administrative Standards,” and “there were areas in my field that weren't addressed fully.” These comments seem to indicate that the respondents recognize the value of working within a program to become familiar with the new standards, but that they want a content that better encompasses the needs of each attendee. Further comments included: “less emphasis was given in budget management” and “I believe the curriculum design could have been stronger,” indicating a possible desire for more content in these areas.

The second set of four questions were designed to get feedback on the perceptions of the Tier II program participants regarding the personalization of the program to their unique needs, including their relationship with their coach. Comments in these areas included “it was not geared toward Special Education, which is where I knew I would be headed. General education was 98% of all topics,” and “[a lack of] professional development in RTI, Special Education, ELD, and cultural proficiency,” indicate a need for more personalized attention to the needs of the attendees. Other comments, such as “I already had the skills I need to perform the job - the opportunity to work with my coach in terms of being a “sounding board” was very valuable,” and “I would just continue the coaching aspect, as that was the most valuable to me” show a strong appreciation of the individualized aspect of the coaching relationship. One comment that gives pause was, “My coach was my principal. Great coach, but I was lucky. Not everyone would want their supervisor to be their coach.” Indeed, best practice would indicate that the trust and confidentiality component of the coaching relationship would preclude an immediate supervisor from taking on the role of coach.

The final third of the queries addressed by respondents covered the area of district support for the new administrator, not only in encouraging enrollment in the Tier II program, but use of district resources, sharing of district practices, interaction between the district and the Tier II program and coaches, and financial support. Comments in this area included several similar to “my district does not pay for these programs” and others similar to “my employer

covered it.” Some indicated partial support, such as “a payment plan was offered.” One insightful comment stated “if possible, I would make it a district based program. The LEA doesn’t know anything about what the district does or needs and the district thinks we are being trained, so they don’t bother to provide any support,” indicating that a strong relationship between the Tier II program providers and the individual school districts is a must for participants in providing a personalized program to meet their needs.

In the final question of the survey, where subjects were asked “If you were designing a Tier II coaching program, which elements of the program in which you participated would you modify or change? Are there any elements you would add?,” there were several comments of note, including these: “I believe the course needs to be centered more on the reflections of the day to day practices that administrators deal with. Perhaps candidates can be asked to journal these events, and allow these to be the meaningful discussions that are had with his/her coach, as well as, share out at the cohort meetings” and “ Though much of the work to be completed is “job embedded”, the most meaningful aspects and take-aways were the conversations I had with my coach. Many of the portfolio assignments seemed like busy-work.” Other meaningful comments included, “Focus on the day-to day issues one can confront. Support administrators in dealing with potential conflict with teachers and staff” and “the structure of the portfolio would be a piece that needs some flexibility. In year two, there were specific areas that had to be addressed and I did not necessarily work in those areas, making it very difficult to address the demands of the portfolio. Make it more flexible so that the candidate can showcase their strengths, and demonstrate growth in an area in which they are not strong, in a more organic and personal way, rather than in prescribed exercises that can be difficult to carry out.”

Additionally, respondents showed a desire to be grouped appropriately to benefit from others in their areas of expertise: “The networking was a primary benefit. Talking with job-alikes was very helpful. In-basket type activities were more helpful than the presentations. The book studies were okay to help frame the conversation of leadership and best practices” and “I would individualize more toward learning groups, e.g., junior high, high school, district administration, special education, for some activities. The general overview of the program was very informative, readings



were appropriate, but an option for individualized learning would have been more beneficial to me.”

Finally, there were several comments that remind us that the overall majority of the respondents to this survey had a very positive experience and appreciated their Tier II program and providers: “I would not change the elements of the program. I gleaned benefit from every aspect, as the organizers attempted to address administrators in unique settings” and “I really loved the program I participated in.”

### **Recommendations**

In designing a new Tier II program, institutions of higher education, as well as districts and county offices, need to balance the CCTC requirements with the needs of the local population of new administrators. While the overall outcome of this survey showed a positive response to the programs currently in place, the study also shows that there are possible areas of deficiency that should be addressed and taken into consideration as a program structure is planned and implemented.

The content of the program needs to be built around the CCTC standards, but also have enough flexibility for the university to work closely in partnership with the various local school districts to provide for the specific needs of participants in the program as well as meet district expectations. Within that relationship between the institutions of higher education and the local districts must be recognition of the needs of those who work with special populations and the content of the program must be comprehensive rather than aimed at a generic administrative position. Incorporating the expertise the university can provide with the expertise and local applicability the school district can contribute should result in a practical and meaningful job-embedded program for the new administrator. Incorporation of job-a-like scenarios with peers and coaches would provide candidates with opportunities to problem solve with assistance. Use of portfolios and other assignments should be directly related to the day-to-day responsibilities of each new administrator.

The leadership coaching component of the new Tier II requirements is backed by sound rationale and the literature tells us that it is a viable strategy for supporting new administrators. Any new Tier II program must heavily incorporate the individualized attention

provided with school-based leadership coaching. The coaches must be highly trained, knowledgeable, and available to the candidates. They must be able to establish the close relationship necessary between the coach and the coachee to be successful in encouraging growth and leadership. The flow of open communication between coach and coachee is a key component of the coaching relationship, thus precluding an immediate supervisor of the candidate in that role.

New administrators also need other support as they become established in their roles. Professional development is one form of support that states and districts can and often do provide to administrators. The new Tier II program is a mix of professional development and coaching, but, while some school districts recognize the value of coaching programs and are providing financial resources for their new administrators, others make it the responsibility of the candidate to provide the financing for the program. This can be problematic if some individuals receive assistance and some do not. The district may have access to Title II funds that could support some or all of the financial responsibility of the candidate, or the new administrator could apply for financial aid through an institution of higher education, making the university another possible option for financial support.

### **Conclusion**

This study from a survey of participants from current Tier II programs has provided the researchers with valuable information regarding the components to include and those to avoid in putting together a university program that meets the requirements of the CCTC and meets the needs and demands of the local community. The content of the program must be comprehensive and practical, incorporating meaningful activities and assignments that are not overly theoretical or perceived as “busywork.” It must include a relationship with the local school district so that the program participants see immediate application to their individual job circumstances. The relationship between the coach and the candidate is the key to a successful program for both the provider and the candidate, so appropriate training and preparation of the coaches is an important program component. The program must be individualized, personal, and practical. New administrators need to feel that they are supported in

their efforts to be effective school leaders. University resources, school district resources, and financial resources are all necessary to support the candidate.

Those of us who work in principal preparation programs realize the importance of induction and support for new administrators. The new CCTC coaching component provides a new and exciting opportunity to be a stronger partner in the success of our candidates.

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**Appendix**  
California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

Induction programs support candidate development and growth in the following areas of educational leadership, requiring documentation in at least one area of each CPSEL, for a minimum of six areas of competence.

CPSEL 1. Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision : Education leaders facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning and growth of all students.

Element 1A: Student-Centered Vision Leaders shape a collective vision that uses multiple measures of data and focuses on equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all students.

Element 1B: Developing Shared Vision Leaders engage others in a collaborative process to develop a vision of teaching and learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

Element 1C: Vision Planning and Implementation Leaders guide and monitor decisions, actions, and outcomes using the shared vision and goals.

CPSEL 2. Instructional Leadership: Education leaders shape a collaborative culture of teaching and learning informed by professional standards and focused on student and professional growth.

Element 2A: Professional Learning Culture Leaders promote a culture in which staff engages in individual and collective professional learning that results in their continuous improvement and high performance.

Element 2B: Curriculum and Instruction Leaders guide and support the implementation of standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments that address student expectations and outcomes.

Element 2C: Assessment and Accountability Leaders develop and use assessment and accountability systems to monitor, improve, and extend educator practice, program outcomes and student learning. Commission on Teacher Credentialing

CPSEL Standard 3. Management and Learning Environment: Education leaders manage the organization to cultivate a safe and productive learning and working environment.

Element 3A: Operations and Facilities Leaders provide and oversee a functional, safe, and clean learning environment.

Element 3B: Plans and Procedures Leaders establish structures and employ policies and processes that support students to graduate ready for college and career.

Element 3C: Climate Leaders facilitate safe, fair, and respectful environments that meet the intellectual, linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, and physical needs of each learner.

Element 3D: Fiscal and Human Resources Leaders align fiscal and human resources and manage policies and contractual agreements that build a productive learning environment.

CPSEL 4. Family and Community Engagement: Education leaders collaborate with families and other stakeholders to address diverse student and community interests and mobilize community resources.

Element 4A: Parent and Family Engagement Leaders meaningfully involve all parents and families, including underrepresented communities, in student learning and support programs.

Element 4B: Community Partnerships Leaders establish community partnerships that promote and support students to meet performance and content expectations and graduate ready for college and career.

Element 4C: Community Resources and Services Leaders leverage and integrate community resources and services to meet the varied needs of all students.

CPSEL 5. Ethics and Integrity: Education leaders make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard.

Element 5A: Reflective Practice Leaders act upon a personal code of ethics that requires continuous reflection and learning.

Element 5B: Ethical Decision-Making Leaders guide and



support personal and collective actions that use relevant evidence and available research to make fair and ethical decisions.

Element 5C: Ethical Action Leaders recognize and use their professional influence with staff and the community to develop a climate of trust, mutual respect, and honest communication necessary to consistently make fair and equitable decisions on behalf of all students. Commission on Teacher Credentialing Handbook Revised Administrative Services Credential Standards 25 October, 2015

CPSEL 6. External Context and Policy: Education leaders influence political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts affecting education to improve education policies and practices.

Element 6A: Understanding and Communicating Policy Leaders actively structure and participate in opportunities that develop greater public understanding of the education policy environment.

Element 6B: Professional Influence Leaders use their understanding of social, cultural, economic, legal and political contexts to shape policies that lead to all students to graduate ready for college and career.

Element 6C: Policy Engagement Leaders engage with policymakers and stakeholders to collaborate on education policies focused on improving education for all students.

Candidates should use the CPSEL Handbook during the Induction program: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/CPSEL-booklet-2014.pdf>



# The Preparation of Inclusive Social Justice Education Leaders

Davide Celoria

## Abstract

*This article is intended to spark dialogue and debate related to the preparation of inclusive social justice education leaders in a time of colorblindness. Drawing attention to the reductionist construction of the professional standards for educational leaders when it comes to preparing educational leaders who are ready to address and eliminate racism, inequalities, and injustices. And calls for the preparation of education leaders and aspiring principals who understand that all isms are endemic and engrained in the fiber of our society and are prepared to address and abolish marginalization in schools and promote places of learning that are inclusive and diverse through the use of three existing frameworks.*

**Keywords:** *social justice, education leadership preparations, standards, inclusiveness*

This article is interested in countering exclusionary schooling that isolates those who are othered through inclusive education and inclusive schools as a form of transformation. Inclusion and inclusiveness in education is about the education of all students. In the words of Gloria Ladson-Billings, it is about “Justice...Just Justice” (AERA, 2015). Although inclusion and inclusive education in the literature most often refers to students with disabilities, it also refers to bilingual learners (most often referred to as English language learners) and other marginalized students. In keeping with Theoharis (2007), the definition of social justice leadership I use in writing this article “centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in school...[through] inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, English language learners (bilingual learners), and other students traditionally segregated in schools...” (p.222). Inclusion is not about disability [or language status], nor is it about schools.

“Inclusion is about social justice. Inclusion demands that we ask, What kind of world do we want and how should we educate students for that world?” (Sapon-Shevin, 2003, p. 25).

In a review of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 [formerly known as ISLLC Standards] (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) and the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>) I was struck by what was included and what was excluded, as well as the language used and not used in the writing of these standards documents. Making me pause to ask whether or not the language used in these two sets of standards reflect racism in an era of colorblindness (Alexander, 2012; Ullucci & Battey, 2011)? And to ask, What kind of social justice leaders do we want leading our schools and how should we prepare these leaders? In considering these questions what hit me was the inadequacy of these standards—particularly when it comes to inclusiveness and social justice education leadership, due to the vagueness of the language used. An inadequacy that makes clear the need to critically review these two sets of standards from a social justice perspective. What was also striking is the need to rethink how we prepare social justice principals and other social justice educational leaders within the context of programs aligned with either set of standards.

Although educational leadership is widely acknowledged as complex and challenging (Bush, 2009; Schmidt, 2010; Shields, 2004) and professors of education prepare thousands of aspiring school leaders every year there is not a plethora of scholarship in the area of administration preparation (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006). Even more startling is the lack of teaching about historically underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized populations (Pazey & Cole, 2012). “According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2014 there were more than 20 million children under 5 years old living in the U.S., and 50.2 percent of them were minorities”(U.S. News, July 6, 2015).

Additionally, the inadequate attention paid to the possible negative and perhaps unintended impact of standards-based educational leadership preparation programs, especially when it comes to inclusiveness and social justice, is another area of concern. Although the stated purpose of the ISLCC standards was to reshape

the profession through a systematic set of curriculum, content, and performance standards (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Murphy, 2005) this is not the same as preparing social justice educational leaders. English (2006) argued that as opposed to raising the bar for preparing educational leaders, standards have lowered them, are reductionist, and serve as a form of deprofessionalization. Celoria and Hemphill (2014) raise concerns about educational leadership preparation programs that are top down, rely on experts imparting knowledge, and employ an overly articulated curricula, or list of discrete skill sets—and argue the value of using a constructivist process-oriented focus when preparing educational leaders. In a similar manner, Brown (2004) makes a case for process-oriented models that create the space for educational leaders to engage in the “...examination of ontological and epistemological assumptions, values and beliefs, context and experience, and competing world views ...[to be] better equipped to work with and guide others in translating their perspectives, perceptions, and goals into agendas for social change” (p. 99).

So what can be done to better prepare aspiring educational leaders in university credential programs that are aligned with either the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) or the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.etc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>)? Becomes a critical question if we want inclusive social justice school leaders who refuse to use colorblindness as a form of racism and marginalization, and who are well positioned to enact and support socially just strategies and practices, including inclusive schooling. However, before answering this question, we need to consider what is included and what is excluded in these two sets of standards. It is also important to take into account the extant body of literature related to social justice leadership, transformative leadership, critical race theory and critical social theory, and principal preparation for their potential contribution to the evaluation and rethinking of programs for aspiring social justice principals and other educational leaders. It is also essential that we “...recognize how our own habitus restricts equity and social justice and then to find ways to overcome these constraints. To do this, we must learn to acknowledge and validate difference without reifying it or pathologizing it” (Shields, 2004, p.

113). Leading to a discussion of three potentially beneficial frameworks for advancing the preparation of principals as social justice leaders.

### **Looking at the Standards from a Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion Lens**

Standards are not unique to education, “Almost every profession has its own professional set of rules or guidelines by which members of the professional association measure their conduct and performance” (Pazey & Cole, 2012, p. 252). Nonetheless, there are critics of standards based preparation programs, including English (2006) and Celoria & Hemphill (2014). Although I believe that the in-depth questioning of any particular set of standards in terms of correctness and value is a worthwhile endeavor—that is a topic for another paper. This article comprises a review of the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>) and tries to understand how these two sets of standards relate the preparation of social justice “...principals [and other educational leaders who] make issues of race, class, gender, [gender identity, language status], disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalized conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision” (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223). In writing this article it is my hope to spark critical reflection, dialogue, and debate.

In other words, to collectively consider how we might best prepare social justice educational leaders who advocate and actively engage in promoting inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, bilingual learners, and other students excluded, marginalized, and segregated in schools. Given educational leadership, and principal leadership in particular, are pivotal to creating and sustaining inclusive school practices that work for all students (Capper, Frattura, & Keys 2000; Riehl, 2000; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008)

**The broader context of equity and social justice.** The Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator->

[prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf](#)) at best suggest an opening for the standards to be presented in a way that promotes *equity* and *social justice* through two very nebulous statements. The first statement references “a commitment to social justice and equity”:

Learning to Lead provides a coherent, comprehensive, and robust system of professional preparation and development that will cultivate and support school leaders who can facilitate powerful instruction for all students and ongoing school improvement through effective management practices, a commitment to social justice and equity, ethical behavior, professional courage, and personal integrity (p.11).

The second statements references “a fairer society, ...opportunity to fulfill...potential, and diversity”:

Equity and diversity are woven throughout the candidates' administrative services credential experiences, aiming to create a fairer society, where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfill his/her potential (equity) and recognize individual as well as group differences, treating people as individuals, and placing positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce (diversity) (p. 35).

Although the language used in these two passages suggests *equity*, *social justice*, and *creating a fairer society* as a consideration, they raised more questions than they answered. In particular—What is actually being said? What is actually meant? Why is the language so vague? What does fairer society, equity, diversity, and social justice mean to the authors? What is the intent? The use of vague language and undefined words is worth noting and reason for concern as there are numerous definitions of social justice in the literature and a lack of agreement (Blackmore, 2001; Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2001; Theoharis & Brooks, 2012).

The same pattern and concern is reflected in how the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) uses *equity* and *social justice*. According to this set of standards educational leaders need to

be able to, “Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school’s culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; *equity*, *inclusiveness*, and *social justice*; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement” (p. 9). “Effective educational leaders strive for [and address] *equity of educational opportunity* and *culturally responsive practices* to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p. 11). Yet, nowhere in the professional standards is there an articulated definition of these terms.

From a positive perspective, the two documents reviewed make reference to *equity* and *social justice*, albeit the references are undefined and underdeveloped, which is reason for celebration and unease as these two words are often used widely by both liberals and conservatives to rationalize stances and strategies that are similar as well as polar opposite (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005).

**Inclusion, inclusive and inclusiveness.** Looking for the use of *inclusion*, *inclusive*, and *inclusiveness* while reading the two set of standards resulted in five findings: 1) The word *inclusive* appears two times in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) and three times in the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>); 2) The word *inclusiveness* is used once in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015); 3) These two sets of standards do not adequately address *inclusion*; 4) Neither of the two documents includes the words *inclusion*, *inclusive*, nor *inclusiveness* specifically related to special education or bilingual learners; and 5) The words *inclusion* and *inclusiveness* are not in either document.

In the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders *inclusive* is used in reference to Standard 1: Mission, Vision and Core Values (see prior section) and Standard 5: Community of Care for Students. “Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student” (p. 13).

In the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin->



Handbook-2014.pdf) *inclusive* is used twice in reference to the California Content Knowledge Expectations for Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs: “A-9. Examine and respond to equity issues related to race, diversity, and access, using inclusive practices” (p. 39); and “F-1. Defining an inclusive “school community” (p. 45). In addition, it is used once in the California Administrative Performance Expectations:

CAPE 7: Demonstrating Understanding of the School and Community Context, Including the Instructional Implications of Cultural/Linguistic, Socioeconomic, and Political Factors... The principal helps teachers and staff access community resources, including parents and other community members, to promote learning about students and families, and to promote culturally and linguistically inclusive instructional practices (p. 47).

## Literature Review

### Social Justice Educational Leadership

The literature on social justice leadership suggests three main limitations of *social justice* as a term: 1) It is too often used as buzzwords rather than a substantive core of education as a profession, “...it is little more than meaningless rhetoric” (Haas & Poyner, 2005, p. 61); 2) “...is a politically loaded term, subject to numerous interpretations (Shoho, Merchant, & Lugg, 2005. p. 48), and 3) Policy praxis that is not aimed on undoing what Freire & Macedo (1995) refer to as oppressive structures and practices.

This is not to say that social justice scholars within education have not explored the meaning, nature and implications of social justice for educational leadership programs. Many social justice scholars reason the social and moral responsibility of educational leaders to engage in critical reflection, exercise professional agency, and act in ways that make evident actions that value rather than marginalize, and result in more equitable and just schooling for students (Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Capper et al., 2006; Evans, 2007; Shields, 2004). Nonetheless, the need remains for theory, research, and practice to be interwoven to

support the type of schooling and society that is inclusive, and empowers rather than marginalizes. Too few scholars propose cutting edge, practical approaches that support the development and practice of truly transformative [inclusive social justice] leaders (Brown, 2004).

There is also a body of work on the dispositions and actions of school leaders who self-identify as working for social justice (Brown, 2004; Furman & Shields, 2005; Shields, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Capper et al. (2006) identify a focus on dispositions, knowledge, and skills as a traditional way of categorizing leadership preparation. Citing Hafner (2004) as defining “dispositions to encompass three aspects: awareness, attitudes, and action. The nine students preparing for school leadership positions reported that the course ‘opened my eyes’, that they were made aware of issues such as deficit thinking, and that they learned new ideas for action” (p. 217). Arguing, “Students [of educational leadership] need time to think, reflect, assess, decide, and possibly change...[as they are exposed] to information and ideas that...stretch beyond their comfort zones, a critique and transformation of hegemonic structures and ideologies...” (Brown, 2004, p. 78). If we are going to prepare educational leaders who possess a critical consciousness and deep understanding about class structures, power relationships, White privilege, misogyny, poverty, and heterosexism (Capper et al., 2006).

Through a comprehensive review of the literature three areas of scholarly work surfaced as being particularly useful in considering how professors and leaders of principal preparation programs might use the standards outlined in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) and the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>) while maintaining and supporting an *equity*, *inclusiveness*, and *social justice* agenda. The areas are: 1) Transformational and Transformative educational leadership, 2) Critical Race Theory and Critical Social Theory, and 3) The Preparation of social justice principals and educational leaders.

### **Transformational and Transformative Educational Leadership**

According to Dugan (2012), “ it is not uncommon for some leaders to effect change by encouraging instructional leadership, distributed leadership, or transformational leadership models to support effective instruction... to explicitly address inequities...lead[ing] for social justice” (p. 122). Although some confusion exists between transformational leadership and transformative leadership—Shields (2010) establishes a clear distinction between the two. In transformative leadership questions of justice, equity, and democracy are key, as is a critique of inequitable and unjust practices with an eye on both greater individual achievement and a better life within society. Placing educational leadership in the wider context within which it is embedded.

Furman (2012) identified a lack of specifics in the literature when it comes to the preparation of educational leaders and the actual practice and capacities needed for inclusive social justice leadership in schools. Maintaining most current social justice educational leadership preparation programs tend to emphasize critical consciousness, what the former ISSLC standards refer to as dispositions, also referred to in the literature as beliefs and values; and do not adequately prepare leaders to have the requisite knowledge and skill needed to make social justice and equity-based changes in schools. Suggesting the need to expand the pedagogical approaches used so that we prepare “...transformative educational leaders [who] foster the academic success of all children through engaging in moral dialogue that facilitates the development of strong relationships, supplants pathologizing silences, challenges existing beliefs and practices, and grounds educational leadership in some criteria for social justice” (Shields, p. 109).

Transformative leadership then, as detailed in the literature, is about making societal change, while reformative educational leadership aims create school communities in which educators take seriously their responsibility for advancing equity, social justice, and quality of life through access and opportunity, respect for difference and diversity, advancement of knowledge and personal freedom along with accountability (Shields, 2012). Leaders who are actively involved in transformative learning, learning that tests the way people perceive themselves in their world. Aware that experiences and expectations are linked with cultural assumptions and presumptions (Brown, 2004).

In writing about transformative leadership, Shields (2004) talks about the use of dialogue and strong relationships to provide access and opportunity. Overcoming silence about all aspects of race, ethnicity, social class, marginalization, and exclusion to make certain we produce schools that are socially just and equitable. Genuine striving for societal change and social justice necessarily involves both critique and transformation through the process of identifying and examining injustices before they can be responded to through the processes of deep democracy (Furman & Shields, 2005). Furman (2012) believes, "...social justice leadership spans several dimensions, which serve as arenas for this leadership praxis—the personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological" (p. 202).

### **Critical Race Theory and Critical Social Theory**

Placing an emphasis on the need to examine the persistence of racism, and the othering of individuals and communities based on socioeconomic status, gender, gender identification, cultural, language status, disability, and sexual orientation is consistent with both Critical Race Theory and Critical Social Theory. Grounded in Critical Race Theory, Gloria Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) theorized race and used it as an analytical tool, for a discussion of race and property and their intersection to "move beyond the boundaries of educational research literature to include arguments and new perspectives from law and the social sciences" (p. 11). Rooting the examination of social inequity and school inequity in three central propositions: 1) "Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the us"; 2) "U.S. society is based on property rights"; and 3) "The intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool through which we can understand social inequity (and, consequently, school inequity)" (p. 12). Central to these propositions is the understanding that "Racism is Endemic and Ingrained in American Life (p. 18).

Cherner, Howard & Delport (2015) present activism as core principal of Critical Race Theory

It is not enough to recognize racism, inequalities, or injustices...individuals must take actions to stop it, and this call is true in education as well... in our classroom, our course

materials, our students, and in ourselves (if we dare to look)...[and respond to] demographic imperatives by teaching [and leading] for equality and social justice, bringing democracy into our schools and classrooms, and being teacher [and leader] activists...(p. 8).

Similarly, in critical social theory, activism "...stands between the constituent base and the powerholders" working as an ally with the community, bringing constituents together to act politically and to advocate individually and collectively for themselves and other marginalized groups with the aim of shifting power (Brown, 2004, p. 86). It involves naming one's own reality through the use of chronicles, stories, counterstories, and revisionist histories... (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Using informed constructive discourse with people who have different experiences and beliefs, adult learners are positioned to examine how privilege, power, and dominance are expressed and reinforced (Brown, 2006). Evans (2007) maintains critical approaches to educational leadership provide valuable alternatives for individuals interested in pursuing issues of social justice through emancipatory practices, and critical leadership strategies. Putting issues of race, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender, sexual orientation, and disabled students at the heart of democracy. It is about action working with theory:

However, to date, the literature offers few specifics about the actual practice of social justice leadership in K-12 schools and the capacities needed by school leaders to engage in this practice. In turn, the literature on leadership preparation is thin in regard to explicit methods for developing these capacities (Furman, 2012, p. 192).

Leadership within the context of Critical Race Theory involves deliberate reflection and consideration of the moral and ethical consequences of schooling on students. "Self-reflection adds the dimension of deep examination of personal and professional belief systems, as well as the deliberate consideration of the ethical implications and effects of practices (Brown, 2004, p. 89)."

### **The Preparation of Social Justice Principals and Educational Leaders**

In the broad sense there is a need for principal and leadership preparation programs to support candidates in developing the disposition, knowledge, and skills necessary to address inequities and marginalization related to class, language, gender, race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, and economic status. In programs that are primarily driven by either the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) or the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>) there is a risk of being subsumed into a trend towards colorblindness, a form of racism. Given the standards use of vague language and a lack of clarity and agreement when it comes to inclusiveness, equity, social justice, democracy, and culturally responsive practices. Additionally, the standards do not make any reference to White privilege.

Preparing educational leaders who are well prepared to serve as activists and advocates for change based on their awareness of explicit and implicit forms of oppression and marginalization within schools is essential. Prepared well "...school leaders [will serve as] the architects and builders of a new social order wherein traditionally disadvantaged peoples have the same educational opportunities, and by extension social opportunities, as traditionally advantaged people" (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks; 2009, p. 4). It takes more than standards to accomplish this—it takes a moral stance, knowledge and a change in praxis.

The preparation of social justice educational leaders can be thick or thin. Thick when preparation programs provide a holistic, active, emancipatory, and inclusive curriculum and pedagogical approach that encourages depth involving both societal change and political action. In contrast, preparation programs are thin when the language is unclear and undefined, and does not lead to action and activism. The following three frameworks are useful when it comes to conceptualizing and thinking about our work at the programmatic, and instructional levels in a manner that is thick: 1) Furman (2012), 2) Brown (2004), and 3) Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian (2006).

### **Social Justice as Praxis**

The conceptual framework for leadership preparation developed by Furman (2012) is organized around three central concepts of social justice leadership: 1) Praxis involves both reflection and action in a Freireian sense; 2) Spans several dimensions of leadership praxis—the personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological; 3) Each dimensions involve certain capacities on the part of the school leader, while all of the dimensions involve reflection and action. Although as Furman (2012) stated, “These ideas are just beginning and intended to be suggestive of the possibilities of for program design” (p. 213). I found them extremely useful when reflecting on an existing program and preparing the Commission on Teacher Credentialing Preliminary Administrative Services Transition Document to ensure the program is both aligned with the newly approval standards and positioned to prepare educational leaders committed to *inclusiveness*, *equity*, and *social justice*.

Employing the work of Furman (2012) to evaluating the program in terms of “Social Justice Leadership as Praxis” was particularly beneficial in thinking through how the program does and does not promote both reflection and action at a programmatic level, course level, professional level, and personal level. Using critical reflection as a process to explore “values, assumptions, and biases in regard to race, class, language, sexual orientation, [gender identity,] and so on and in turn affects our leadership practice” (p. 205).

The seven dimensions of social justice leadership praxis identified by Furman (2012): Personal, Interpersonal, Communal, Systemic, Ecological, Reflection and Action offer considerable utility. That said, the programmatic suggestions provided are based on her review of the literature and while not exhaustive, they are practical and useful.

### **A Process-oriented Approach to Preparing Social Justice Educational Leader**

Brown (2004) offers a process-oriented approach to preparing social justice educational leaders who are committed to equity using a weaving metaphor where the warp refers to the “theoretical underpinnings of a transformative framework... and the pedagogical strategies as the woof” (p. 78). The warp involves three theoretical interwoven perspectives—adult learning theory/development,

transformative learning theory/processes, and critical social theory that support the development of transformative leaders. “Through a wide array of roles, methods, and techniques, they ...take responsibility for growth by questioning the learner’s expectations and beliefs” (p. 87). Preparing transformative social justice leaders involves “a fundamental rethinking of content, delivery, and assessment. Offering courses that are fashioned and infused with critical reflective curricula and methodologies and stimulate students to go beyond current behavioral boundaries ...” (p. 88).

Given Brown’s definition of a transformative educational leader “...it makes sense for preparation programs to include approaches that enable participants to challenge their own assumptions, clarify and strengthen their own values, and work on aligning their own behaviors and practice with these beliefs, attitudes, and philosophies” (Brown, 2004, p. 81). As well as the need to replicate what Brown (2004), refers to as “alternative approaches” by attending to the skill and attitude development of aspiring social justice educational leaders through the use of cultural autobiographies, life histories, prejudice reduction workshops, cross-cultural interviews, educational plunges, diversity panels, reflective analysis journals, and activist assignments at the micro, mesa, and macro levels allowing students and professors to acquire and expand their ability to reflect, act, and be more successful.

### **Attending to What School Leaders Beliefs and Knowledge**

Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian (2006) proposed a worthwhile framework for conceptualizing the preparation of leaders for social justice that attends to “what school leaders must believe, know, and do to lead socially just schools that [they] refer to as critical consciousness, knowledge and skills” (p. 212). The framework proposes, “Educational leadership programs need to attend to critical consciousness, knowledge, and practical skills focused on social justice...requir[ing] curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment oriented toward social justice... (p. 212).

...all seven aspects of the framework must be attended to if preparation programs are to realize the full potential of leadership for social justice in their graduates. The two primary dimensions of the framework, that is the curriculum,



pedagogy, and assessment that preparation programs engage with in order to develop the critical consciousness, knowledge, and skills of future leaders for social justice synergetically inform each other. For example, the consciousness, knowledge, and skills that school leaders need to lead socially just schools must align with the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in preparation programs and vice versa. At the same time, this leadership development for social justice can only take place if professors intentionally create an atmosphere of emotional safety for social justice risk taking in their programs and in the courses and other learning experiences in those programs

### **Conclusion**

Neither the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) or the Administrative Services Preliminary and Clear Induction Credential Program Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook-2014.pdf>) are adequate when it comes to the preparation of inclusive social justice educational leaders who are competent to confront the use of race, class, gender, gender identification, disability, sexual orientation, language status, and othering for purposes of exclusion, marginalization and oppression. What Furman (2012), Brown (2004), Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian (2006) offer are three frameworks that encourages us to reimagine our work and can be useful as a guides in developing program frameworks and courses for the preparation of social justice educational leaders. They expand the focus of critical consciousness to include “disability, homophobia and heterosexism, and language diversity in children” and other historically and currently marginalized students (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006, p. 218).

Each framework presented provides an excellent starting point. As a whole the three frameworks go a long way in enabling principal preparation programs to expand the use of either set of standards in a socially just manner.

### **Discussion**

In this paper I strategically position the conversation of inclusion and inclusiveness within a broader context of social justice leadership that includes class, language, gender, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalized students, families and staff. Centering on issues related to the preparation of social justice education leaders and aspiring principals who understand that all *isms* are endemic and engrained in the fiber of our society and are prepared to address and abolish marginalization in schools and promote places of learning that are inclusive and diverse. Preparing educational leaders to serve as change advocates based on their awareness of explicit and implicit forms of oppression and marginalization within schools, and who are committed to eradicating the predictive power of demographics calls for more than adherence to a set of standards.

The frameworks identified and discussed in this paper go beyond the standards and make a significant contribution to the preparation of social justice educational leaders.\_\_\_\_Providing potentially excellent starting points to consider: 1) What kind of world do we want and how should we educate students for that world? 2) Whether or not the language used in these two sets of standards reflects colorblindness? 3) What kind of social justice leaders do we want leading our schools and how should we prepare these leaders? And 4) what would it take for our programs to prepare these educational leaders?

Each of the three frameworks serves as a resource and provides tools for the preparation of educational leaders equipped to confront injustice of every type as they struggle to create a world that rejects racism, and classism—indeed all forms of exclusion and oppression. Educating all students to become productive and responsible citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world that is theirs. Individuals with critical media proficiency, who have the ability to deal with the increasingly complex information that assaults them on a multi-sensory level everyday. Able to examine and confront the persistence of racism, and the othering of individuals and communities based on socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, cultural, language status, disability, and sexual orientation.

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# Various Assessments Utilized in California Preliminary Administrative Services Preparation Programs

Deborah E. Erickson

## Abstract

*Every two years, institutions sponsoring credentialing programs in California are required to submit a detailed biennial report, which includes data on at least four key assessments showing 1) candidate competence and/or 2) program efficacy. This article reports the types of assessments used from 25 institutions that completed biennial reports for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential between 2008 through 2011. Included are data from independent, California State University, and University of California institutes of higher education.*

For the past decade, there has been increased interest in accountability measures for institutions of higher education. In 2006, the US Department of Education report, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of US Higher Education* called on universities and colleges to promote educational quality and “embrace a culture of continuous innovation (p.5).” One way to ensure continuous improvement and accountability, according to the report, was through the use of data to ascertain student learning.

The American Council on Education’s (2012) report, *Assuring Academic Quality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Self-Regulation in a New Era*, stated that major changes in the higher education environment create increased pressure on accountability, including the following: 1) heightened demands for accountability; 2) new forms of instructional delivery; 3) new educational providers and programs; 4) new students and patterns of attendance; and 5) globalization of higher education. The report suggested recommendations of increased transparency of accreditation, increased centrality of evidence about student success and educational quality, prompt action against substandard

institutions, common terminology, and enhanced cost effectiveness of accreditation.

In order to ensure quality in the programs accredited by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the accountability system for educator preparation was revised in 2006. The system was designed to assess program effectiveness and candidate competency through three activities: Program Assessment (program alignment with standards), Biennial Reports (data analyzed and used to assess program effectiveness and candidate competency), and a site visit (verification of the program assessment and biennial reports). Each institution completed a seven-year accreditation cycle, which includes the following:

- Year 1: Collect and analyze data
- Year 2: Collect and analyze data; submit biennial report
- Year 3: Collect and analyze data
- Year 4: Collect and analyze data; submit program assessment documents
- Year 5: Collect and analyze data; submit biennial report
- Year 6: Collect and analyze data; site visit
- Year 7: Collect and analyze data; follow-up to site visit

Every institution or organization offering CTC-approved programs followed this pattern, including educational leadership preparation. According to the report of the pilot process (CTC, 2007), the purpose of the biennial report was twofold:

To ensure that institutions and program sponsors are collecting candidate assessment and candidate outcomes data annually, and to ensure that institutions and program sponsors are analyzing the data they collect and use it to inform programmatic decision-making (p.1).

Every institution or organization which recommends credentials for teaching or service candidates is responsible for submitting a report every two years that includes the number of program completers, data from at least four assessments used to determine program effectiveness and candidate competency, and a unit report that provides an institutional summary and plan of action. The following table outlines the number of biennial reports submitted to the CTC (2012) as of 2011-2012:

Table 1  
*Number of Institutions Submitting Biennial Reports by Year*

Year	Cohorts Submitting (Fall Submission)	Total Number of Institutions Submitting Biennial Reports
2007-08	Orange, Green, Violet	47 (pilot)
2008-09	Red, Yellow, Indigo	51 (pilot)
2009-10	Orange, Blue, Violet	102
2010-11*	Red, Green, Indigo	117
2011-12*	Yellow, Blue, Violet	114

*Note.* \* In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, local education agencies that offer General and Special Education Induction (BTSA) were required to begin regularly submitting biennial reports.

### **A Brief History of CTC's Administrative Credential**

Prior to 1984, a single administrative credential authorized service in any administrative position. At that time, a two-tiered administrative credential was implemented to provide both entry-level preparation and a structure to provide support in advanced preparation in the first five years of service. A Commission report entitled *An Examination of the Preparation, Induction, and Professional Growth of School Administrators for California* presented the findings and resulting policy recommendations that were adopted by the Commission on March 5, 1993 (retrieved from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook.pdf>, p. 11). In March of 2002, the standards were redesigned to focus on instructional leadership and success for all students, and the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs) were approved as a framework for the preparation of and performance expectations for administrators. Also, at this time the Professional Clear standards were redesigned to include mentoring and induction activities based on an individualized learning plan. An examination-only route option was also established in 2002 (retrieved on 10.10.15 from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook.pdf>, p. 12).

Action was taken in 2008 to modify the format of the Preliminary Administrative Standards by eliminating the use of the

required elements; the Commission adopted these modified standards in April of 2009.

### **Educator Preparation Assessments**

As noted previously, all institutions or organizations approved by the CTC to provide a Preliminary or Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential submit data every other year to show candidate competency as well as program efficacy. Those institutions that submitted a biennial report during the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 academic years and provided a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) were included in this study, including the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems as well as private institutions. The following table outlines the number of administrative credentialing programs that were analyzed and included in the sample.

Table 2  
*Initial Teacher Preparation Credential Program Data*

Type of institution	Number of institutions reporting
University of California	3
California State University	10
Private, Independent University	12

In studying the various forms of assessments used by these 25 institutions, there was a wide variance of types of assessments as well as the purpose for which those assessments were utilized. Table 3 outlines the various assessments used by Preliminary Administrative Services Credential programs throughout the state to measure candidate competence and/or program effectiveness.

Table 3  
*Utilization of Various Assessments in PASC Programs*

Assessment	No of Institutions Utilizing Assessment	Percentage
Practicum Evaluation	21	84%
Portfolio	16	64%
Program Exit Survey	12	48%
Key Assignments	8	32%
Course Grades	7	28%
Field-Based Projects	7	28%
Course or Program Evaluations	6	24%
Induction Plan	5	20%
Surveys of Employers	4	16%
Summative Oral Presentation	4	16%
CPSEL Instrument	4	16%
Comprehensive Written Exam	3	12%
Capstone Paper	3	12%
360-Degree Leadership Analysis	2	8%
Case Study	2	8%
Assessment Center	2	8%
Candidate Self-Assessment	2	8%
Alumni Survey	1	4%
Reflective Essay	1	4%

The most highly utilized assessment across programs was the Practicum Evaluation, followed by use of some type of portfolio assessment. Because of the way in which the descriptions of assessments were submitted to the CTC, it was impossible to verify the equivalency of assessments. For example, what one institution named a “Capstone Paper” was included, but not the only, assignment within a portfolio assessment. These types of discrepancies are the cause for additional questions to be raised as to the current validity and reliability of measuring candidate competence and program efficacy using data from the biennial reports. While the biennial report has given institutions the opportunity to formally assess each candidate and use the data for continuous program improvement, there is no way for the CTC staff reading the reports to verify best practice in the assessment of PASC candidates, nor is there the

opportunity within the current system to measure assessments with a degree of certainty as to the reliability of the measurement.

In 2014, the CTC Commissioners requested that a special task force be convened to study the streamlining of the accreditation process. Included in the report were the design specifications for not only a teacher preparation assessment but also an administrator performance assessment. The original design standards for the APA called for a single assessment contractor to provide centralized administration and scoring for the APA and to support programs in the implementation of local scoring.

Local scoring implementation would mean that only faculty and other qualified individuals working with and chosen by the program would score the APA responses from a given institution's candidates. The training process would still be facilitated and the scoring process overseen by the contractor (retrieved on 10.15.15 from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2015-10/2015-10-2F.pdf>, p.3). The proposed design standards did not parallel that of the design structure of teacher education assessment, which allowed for multiple assessments to be used if meeting the design standards as set forth by the CTC.

In January of 2015, a California Department of Education \$1,000,000 grant was awarded to the University of San Diego. The grant called for the development of a valid and reliable performance assessment instrument and protocol that could be used in the state of California for prospective school administrators. The results of grant are to be finalized and made public in December of 2015 (Personal Communication, 10/9/15).

After input from leaders of Educational Administration programs from across the state, at the October Commission on Teacher Credentialing meeting CTC Deputy Director Amy Reising suggested that the preliminary administrative credential design standards parallel those expectations as set forth in the teacher assessment design standards. Testimony from CAPEA Past President Peg Winkelman was presented; as well, written input from educational leaders across the state was submitted and the item was tabled until more information could be gathered for the December 2015 CTC meeting (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/meetings.html>).

The 2015 Fall CAPEA Conference included two agenda items on the recent changes in California Administrator Preparation, including the proposed Design Standards for the Administrator Performance Assessment. Deputy Director Reising reported on the recent extension of approval of the APA Design Standards, including the possibility of allowing multiple entities developing the administrator assessment. Gay Roby, CTC Consultant, updated the CAPEA membership on recent actions of the Commission (personal communication, 10/12/2015). Represented at the conference were faculty from the CSU system, independent universities, and K-12 district leaders. During the conference, attendees were asked for input regarding the APA, including previously approved design standards. The leadership of CAPEA is currently compiling all input from the membership who attended the conference.

### **Final Thoughts**

While the process is currently in revision, the biennial and subsequent site visitation reports submitted to the CTC staff and Committee on Accreditation have been frequent and thorough. As was found in the work of Darling Hammond (2010) and Chung (2008), the PACT and TPA assessments positively impact the work of the pre-service educator through his/her first year of teaching and beyond. Therefore, one would draw the conclusion that an assessment of pre-service administrators would also positively impact the work of the beginning administrator.

From the aforementioned issues in PASC candidate assessment, it is most likely that there will be some kind of assessment performance required for all PASC candidates in the state of California within the next two years in order to better assess candidate competency in a more reliable fashion. It is yet to be seen whether or not this may be a contract awarded to a single testing and measurement entity or if consortia or single programs will also be able to submit assessments that meet the Administrator Performance Assessment design standards. Since effective school administrators are required to have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work closely with teachers, parents, and community, it would be imperative that any assessment make available the opportunity to measure the candidate's ability in these areas. From the work already done by

existing PASC programs in the measurement of candidate competence and the efficacy of programs, it would seem that some combination of practicum performances as well as a state-wide portfolio assessment holds promise for a reliable and valid assessment of our future leaders.



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# Expecting All Students and Educators to Use the Hearts and Minds Well

Martin Krovetz

It is the first day of school at almost any public middle or high school. Oscar enters his math classroom thinking, “I have never been successful in math, but I will try to make this year different.” The teacher enters the classroom thinking, “Here I go again, 150+ students, many of whom have big gaps in their math knowledge. I will try to get off to a good start today.” The teacher introduces herself/himself and begins class. Homework is assigned. Oscar goes home thinking he understands the lesson, gets a snack, and starts on the homework. Not able to do most of the problems, he gets discouraged and gives up. The next day Oscar has no homework to turn in. “Here I go again,” he thinks. “Here they go again,” thinks the teacher. The 179-Day War begins.

About a year ago I read Paul Tough’s book *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* (2012). I found the premise intriguing and consistent with my writing on resilience and my reading about mind-set. For me, the critical question is NOT “How do people learn perseverance and grit?” or “How do students learn to be resilient?” The critical question is ***“What are the characteristics of school, family, community cultures that support students to act with perseverance and resilience?”*** If we focus only on the student, we too easily blame Oscar and Oscar’s family. If we focus on the culture of our school, family, community we have control over how **we** relate to the student.

During my fourteen years as a high school principal every year several parents, usually fathers, came to my office to talk about their senior student, almost always a daughter. The parent would tell me that he thought his daughter had received a quality education but was concerned about how she would do in college. She had made excellent grades but had not scored as high on the SAT as the parent had hoped. The parent felt that the school inflated grades and had given him and his daughter false hopes about college. My response was always the same, “You know your daughter, and I know your

daughter. She works very hard. She has tremendous self-discipline, sets high standards for herself, and perseveres. She asks for help and will redo any assignment as many times as it takes to earn an “A”. She earned those “A”s. She will do fine in college.” The term “grit” was not yet in my vocabulary or I would have described these daughters as “gritty”. I have kept in touch with several of these fathers and daughters, and the daughters have not let me down. They approach life with the mind-set that they can overcome obstacles, be resilient, and accomplish what they set out to do.

It is usually not the smartest person or most athletic who excels in the long run, but the person who displays the mind-set to work hard, to persevere, to be gritty. I attended graduate school at the University of North Carolina (UNC). I am therefore a huge college basketball fan and particularly a Tar Heel fan. Michael Jordan is regarded as the best basketball player of all times. When he was a freshman UNC won the national championship, and he made the winning basket. When he was a sophomore, UNC lost to Indiana in the quarterfinals. Bob Knight, the renowned Indiana coach, noticed that Jordan did not drive well to his left, so he had his defenders overplay Jordan to the right. Indiana won. As a junior Jordan had a fantastic drive to his left. He was a very talented basketball player, and he was talented because he had a mind-set that helped him work hard to be so. Very importantly, he had a coach in Dean Smith who believed in him and insisted that he improve his game both offensively (driving to his left) and defensively (Jordan’s fame included his prowess as an outstanding defensive player).

As the Director of LEAD, [www.lead-ces.com](http://www.lead-ces.com), an affiliated center with the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), [www.essentialschools.org](http://www.essentialschools.org), my colleagues and I have the opportunity to work with teachers and administrators to develop Habits of Mind and Habits of Character that focus expectations for students and teachers. Habits of Mind are aligned with Bloom’s taxonomy in kid-friendly language. See the attached EPERRS from Anzar High School ([www.asjUSD.k12.ca.us](http://www.asjUSD.k12.ca.us)). Habits of Character are the expectations for how students will approach being a student and are closely aligned with grit and perseverance. See attached PIKE from Renaissance Academy ([www.arUSD.org](http://www.arUSD.org)). Both are as much about the culture of the school as they are about expectations for the students.

How do people learn to have these qualities? Can they be learned? In his book *Tough* claims that brains develop differently for children up to age three who have high stress in their lives than children without such stress. The part of the brain that does not develop as well is related to self-regulatory behaviors, ie: perseverance and delay of gratification. If we want to be optimistic that everyone has a fair chance in our society, then we have to believe that one can be resilient and learn the skills, behaviors and attitudes to overcome adversity.

There have been criticisms of the research on grit and resilience, indicating that the emphasis too often is a deficit model, blaming children for not being gritty or resilient enough. Again, my focus is on the institution of schooling, and how the school culture can and should foster grit and resilience in our students, especially students of poverty, who may learn to be gritty and resilient in their interactions their peers, but who are too often not successful in the school setting.

**Resilience** - *The television show Cheers had it correct; everyone wants to hang out in places where people know her/his name.*

I have written extensively about how schools can foster the resilience of students (Krovetz, 2008, 1999). Based on the work of Emmy Werner (1992) and Bonnie Benard (1991), we know that children (and adults) are more resilient when they are in a family, community and/or school where people know them well and care deeply about them, have high expectations for them and focus support on helping them meet these expectations, and when their voices are valued. If these conditions are not present in a child's life we know that any child will have a very difficult time succeeding in life.

When you talk to someone who has overcome great stress in his/her life, she often talks about a grandparent or teacher who cared deeply about her and championed her. I have a good friend who had older brothers who were in trouble with the law. Two of his high school teachers took him aside, telling him that they would not allow him to go down the same path. They helped him apply to college and paid for his first year. He went on to be a teacher, principal and superintendent in that school district.

## Locus of Control

A relevant personality trait is locus of control (Rutter, 1954, 1966; Krovetz, 1974). **Internal** people explain success by indicating that they tried hard and/or had ability; they explain failure by indicating that they did not try hard and/or did not have ability. **Externals** explain success by indicating that the task was easy and/or good luck; they explain failure by indicating that the task was hard and/or bad luck. One might think that internal students outperform external students in school, but there is no research to support this. In fact, school practices often favor external students, as teachers talk about “giving a grade to a student” or students say “the teacher gave me the grade” instead of the grade earned. However, perseverance/grit and resilience are internal traits. If students are to be successful in and after school, they need to learn these traits and value them.

## Mind-set

Students’ mind-sets have a direct influence on their grades and achievement test scores. As Carol Dweck (2007, 2010) reports, students who believe that intelligence can be developed through effort outperform students who believe in a fixed mind-set. She writes that teaching students to have a growth mind-set raises their grades and achievement test scores. Students who believe in a growth mind-set are more likely to focus on learning, to believe in effort, and to demonstrate resilience. These results have been shown to reduce the achievement gap for female, African American and Latino students.

I am often asked what interventions I think school districts should implement to help students, particularly in math. Educators consider adding time during the school day or before or after school, computer programs, etc. I say that in my opinion lack of student progress is 75% mind-set on the part of students **and** teachers and 25% gaps in academic skills. I believe that students struggling in math for example would benefit more from AVID (See below) than from a second period of math.

Teacher mind-set is critical. John Hattie has written that a student’s mindset has an effect size of .19. “He says that the reason that growth vs. fixed mindset has a low effect size is due to the fact that adults have a fixed mindset and keep treating students

accordingly, so right now the effect size is low, and will continue to stay low, unless we change our practices in the classroom. We put students in ability groups, they get scores on high stakes tests that help label them, and then we place them in Academic Intervention Services (AIS) which adds to their fixed mindset. Once students enter into AIS or Special Education, very few leave. *Students are conditioned to have a fixed mindset, and it's due to us.*" (De Witt, 2015) Many teachers need quality professional development regarding mindset and equity. They need to approach teaching with an equity lens rather than an equality lens, that is not giving all students the same thing (only works if everyone starts from the same place), but instead giving all students what they need to have access to the same opportunities.

### **What are Examples of School/Community Programs that Foster the Mind-set of Perseverance/Grit and Resilience?**

#### **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)** ([www.avid.org](http://www.avid.org))

AVID is a college readiness intervention for elementary through higher education that is designed to increase school-wide learning and performance. Beginning with one high school and 32 students in San Diego, AVID has impacted more than 700,000 students in 4900 schools (K-12) and 28 postsecondary institutions in 46 states and the District of Columbia. The formula seems simple - raise expectations of students and, with the AVID support system in place, they will rise to the challenge. What distinguishes AVID from other educational reform programs is its continuous success rate. Many of its components, ie: cross-age tutoring, Cornell Notes, graphic organizers, are now practices in many schools.

#### **Big Brothers Big Sisters** (<http://evidencebasedprograms.org/1366-2/117-2>)

Big Brothers Big Sisters community-based and school-based mentoring programs match youths age 6-18, predominantly from low-income, single-parent households, with adult volunteer mentors. This program was evaluated in one randomized controlled trial of 1,138

youths, age 10-16, who applied to one of eight large Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in various U.S. cities between October 1991 and February 1993, met the program's eligibility requirements, and agreed to participate in the study. Youths were randomly assigned to 1) an intervention group matched with a mentor or 2) a control group that was placed on a waitlist for the duration of the study (18 months). Follow up with participants demonstrated significant benefits of this program over school, family and community variables.

### **What Does a School Look, Feel and Taste Like if it Fosters the Mind-set of Resilience and Grit in its Students?**

The answer to this question is based on the three key factors of resilience – each student is well known by at least one adult, expectations are high and support is focused for all students, and students know that their voices are valued. The two programs discussed above – AVID and Big Brothers Big Sisters - share these factors. In addition, students need to be placed in situations where perseverance is valued and rewarded, where students are faced with some frustration and they learn to overcome this frustration. Letting students experience “failure” in a safe environment and then working to learn from that and try again is something few adults in schools feel comfortable with, especially in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era, or the new Common Core mind-set, where critical thinking is said to be valued but teachers might be paid based on their students' responses on a national exam.

During my years as a high school teacher and principal I did not know the terms mind-set, resilience and grit. I did understand that it was critical for teachers to believe in their own self-efficacy to teach all of their students and for students to believe in their self-efficacy to be successful learners. Too often teachers and students do not have these beliefs and prove themselves right, as in the opening paragraph for Oscar.

School practices that foster resilience, perseverance and a positive mind-set:

- Small schools and/or small learning communities/academies where every teacher knows every student by name and knows something personal about a large number of students



- Teaching in depth rather than breadth, with skillful checking for understanding, differentiation, re-teaching, and extension as appropriate
- Student as worker, teacher as coach, that is students working as hard as the teacher
- Expecting all students to do rigorous, challenging, relevant work that engages their interests, ie: problem-based and place-based learning, students exhibiting their learning to authentic audiences
- School leaders being visible with students and adults, setting the tone of inclusion by daily conversations with each staff member about professional practice and with students and parents about student learning and interests
- School governance practices that include the voices of all key stakeholders in important decisions about how the school operates
- Student discipline practices that are designed to cause students to reflect on their actions and improve their behaviors rather than to punish
- Cross-age tutoring, mentoring and apprenticeships that expects all students to receive support from older students and adults and to give support to younger students
- Service learning that expects all students to contribute to their community
- Recognition that adults in schools cannot foster resilience and growth mindset for their students if their own resilience and mindset is not fostered. The three factors must be in place for the adults as well as for the students

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## Attachment 1

### Habits of Mind - Anzar's EPERRs

- Evidence:**            **What do I know and how do I know it?**  
What are all the choices?  
Show the evidence.
- Perspective:**        **What are the biases - mine and others?**  
What do I already know from my past experiences, and what's my bias?  
What is the bias of the research used?  
What are alternative points of view?  
What did I learn from the experiences of others?  
Walk in somebody else's shoes.
- Extension:**         **What are the deeper implications?**  
How might this affect the future?  
What if something changed?  
Is there a pattern here?  
How does this connect to other ideas/issues?  
Going beyond what you know ...
- Relevance:**        **What difference does this make?**  
Why is this important to me?  
How can I use this?  
How does this issue influence the community?  
How is this important to my community?  
What can people do with this information?
- Reflection:**        **What did I learn?**  
What other questions does this bring up?  
Has what I've done changed my way of thinking?

## Attachment 2

### Renaissance Academy for Arts, Science and Social Justice Habits of Character

#### PASSION

“Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.”

Anthony J. D’Angelo

“By believing passionately in something that still does not exist, we create it.

The nonexistent is whatever we have not sufficiently desired.”

Franz Kafka

#### INTEGRITY

“Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody’s going to know whether you did it or not.”

Oprah Winfrey

“Right is right, even if everyone is against it; and wrong is wrong,

even if everyone is for it.”

William Penn

#### KINDNESS

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

Mother Teresa

“Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”

Mark Twain



## **EFFORT**

“We will go to the moon. We will go to the moon and do other things, NOT because they are easy but because they are HARD.”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

“The difference between a successful person and others is neither a lack of strength, nor a lack of knowledge but rather a lack of will.”

Vince Lombardi



# Bringing Human Rights Education to US Classrooms

Diane Mukerjee

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDR) is a critical document in the history of human justice. The Declaration was confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 as a “common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected” (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>). Article 26.1 of the UDR proclaims: “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free...” (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>).

Human rights certainly have a strong history in the field of education. Beginning in the 1800s, education’s primary focus was on reading, writing, arithmetic, and to overall develop strong, moral citizens (Deschenes & Tyack 2001). The population of students back then was comprised of white males. These students were provided the same education under the assumption that all in this population were born equal and, therefore, the burden of success or failure fell on their own character. As we move forward in the history of education, the United States society began incorporating a more inclusive approach. While schools were segregated, groups beyond white males were receiving some form of education. This segregation led to inequities in the allocation of resources, which in turn resulted in inequitable educational outcomes. The civil rights movement attempted to abolish these radical differences through mandated desegregation. Despite civil rights advocates’ best efforts to encourage educators to not blame the child and, instead, look towards instructional practices, segregation and resource inequities continued for a long time (Deschenes et al, 2001). If one keeps in mind Article 26.1, this segregation and inequities, one can argue, are the most widely experienced forms of human rights violations in the United States. This is true for both the populations directly affected, and those who witness such violations.



This widely accessible experience in the TK-16 school system is noted by this reviewer as the intent of Katz and Spero's collection of essays: *Bringing Human Right Education to US Classrooms*. Personal connections are two fold: self connection and connection to others. Educational research readily supports the notion of student personal connections to an issue, text or topic, as highly motivating (Woolfolk, 2013). Abramson (2011) further expands this notion of personal connection to acknowledging the significance of relationships between the students and instructor. The author suggests this relationship as one based "on the concept of mutual sharing of personal experiences, values, beliefs, and obviously course content" (p.1). Katz and Spero present a collection of lessons aimed to build personal and collective understanding of human rights in action, as well as for the reader to realize the urgency to become an agent of change which, in turn, may lead to forging a type of student who recognizes and stands up against the violation of human rights.

In the book, Olga Talamante sets the stage for the model, by recounting personal experiences as an immigrant child from México, living in economic poverty. Here, she identifies with and recounts the struggle to meet immigrant children both at home and school. Talamante constructs her personal understanding and conception of human rights, and the power of not only encouraging others to also apply their experiences, and come up with their own definition of human rights. However, she emphasizes the significance of not only personally constructed meaning but also a collective understanding of human right issues, and the strength of systemic practices to protect those rights.

Consistently throughout the book, students mirrored the Talamante's experiences by first linking with the overall concept of human rights and second, by tying that understanding to personal connections. It is, indeed, the emphasis on personal connections that leads to deeper understanding and action.

This collection of essays is prefaced with a discussion of Human Rights Education; it is offered as a tool to help practitioners "engage students in critical thinking about human rights and how their own lives are affected by the protections or the violation of those rights" (foreword, xvi). Tibbets takes the reader through a discussion of the historical context of the development of the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and what she notes as a resistance, due to

the “claim” that they are universal and that are often instructed through the lens of the dominant culture, with little regard for local interpretation. The book offers pedagogic examples which illustrate the potential power of the use of a local lens.

Tibbitts notes the pedagogies utilized by Effective Human Right Educators as vital to constructing this localized lens,: “Experimental and activity-centered, Problem-posing, participative, dialectical, analytical healing, strategic-thinking oriented, goal and action-oriented” (p. 8). Katz and Spero contextualize local rights education in action through the account of the Oscar Grant case in Oakland in 2009. They describe the struggle of a school addressing the students in discussing a case clearly involving human rights. This sets the stage to deliberate the US government’s slow progress incorporating human rights education (HRE) in schools. Supporting the notion of contextualizing and localizing student’s view of human rights, the idea of “US exceptionalism” is then explored – suggesting the notion that human rights violations exist in other countries and not the U.S. certainly has led to a lack of coordinated efforts to infuse HRE in the education system.

The remainder of the book contains expertly designed and executed models of explicit human rights instruction from Elementary through Higher Education settings. Throughout these models, the book provides vivid examples of oversimplification of human rights education and offers suggestions to create stronger connections and deeper understandings.

Blundell explores cases, in primary education, such as the recollections of the Civil Rights Era as events reduced to activists such as Rosa Parks, at the expense of losing the larger context of the times; instead, through collaborative learning activities the author creates a model to construct a larger understanding of the historical influence of the Black Panther Party. Brennan presents an additional hands-on model - a setting for 1<sup>st</sup> grade students to learn about the concept of an “adequate standard of living”. This example aims to build connections both personally and collaboratively.

The exploration of human rights continues into secondary and higher education, including topics such as Adamian’s Bioethics and Science. and Delany’s Islamaphobia and Critical Media. In the latter case, students concern themselves with the analysis of media and

identify, and examine items such as subliminal messages, exaggerations, and general manifestations of Islamaphobia.

In Arduini's model of High School human rights education utilizing *The Crucible*, the author posits: "HRE offers an alternative pedagogical approach to engage students in curriculum, and the method itself allows disenfranchised students the opportunity to learn about how to advocate for their own rights" (p. 153)

The book resonates with the message that a lack of true understanding of Human Rights Education may result in further perpetuating the over simplification of human rights as something that happens "out there" or "a long time ago". This situation may, therefore, prevent students realize their personal and collective relationship with human rights at the grassroots, local level.

The authors craft a strong foundation of lessons and settings demonstrating the potential impact of intentional and explicit human rights education. In addition, some of the book's contributors point out to the mismatch between current educational demands - such as high stakes testing and mandated curriculum - and human rights education, as a major roadblock. Yet these contributors also showed the potential to draw strong connections between mandated curriculum and standards instruction, and human rights education, through cases such as the Delany's Islamaphobia and Critical Media lesson.

The aforementioned is strongly noted, as curricular demands and insufficient knowledge about human rights may be perceived as insurmountable obstacles to the intentional teaching of human rights throughout the education system.

*Bringing Human Rights to US Classrooms* gives accessible, thought provoking, and inspiring models for education in the country. The book certainly emphasizes the urgency for integrating human rights education throughout the entire system. But it also suggests that said efforts may run into tremendous barriers, as previously discussed. The book does suggest a means to begin the conversations around formalizing human rights education, at the same time that it makes a case for a next step: a discussion about systemic change in the field, through a "normative-reeducative" approach.

The normative-reeducative approach acknowledges that change is best supported by "deep reflection on beliefs and practices" (Loucks-Horsley, 1987 as referenced by Richarson & Placier, 2001).

The approach also argues that an outside resource does not dictate the change, instead, this outsider works collaboratively with the people responsible for implementing the change. In other words, teachers receive formal professional development on the subject, but with a focus on developing their own philosophy of change.

Moreover, the normative-reeducative approach would help to build the local capacity to sustain the change, as practices regarding Human Right Education would become a part of teachers' belief systems. Thus, the perception of "another program to be implemented" would be avoided. A system of on-going professional development along with school-wide systems that allow teachers to "work together in teams and engage in collective inquiry is to serve as a catalyst for action" (DuFour, 2004). This practice may eventually help laterally develop teachers' pedagogy with program change.

Finally, this is an engaging and useful book to TK-16 teachers, aids, and especially educational leaders. It clearly establishes and illustrates the need for change in our practices, so that to create a school-wide environment that fosters personal connections and collective understandings of human rights. The classroom models provided throughout the book, validate the great potential of this practice - a practice that deserves widespread implementation.

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