



*Research and Best Practices That Advance the Profession of Educational Administration*

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## A Message From the Editor

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In the first article, Sandra L. Harris explores the criticism that educational leadership programs fail to bridge the gap between theory and practice through a qualitative research study involving 16 doctoral students enrolled in a summer session field experience and seminar class. After completing 24 hours of the core curriculum, the doctoral students were asked to write a paper reflecting their beliefs and practices upon entering the program, as well as their current beliefs and practices about educational leadership. Harris discusses the themes that emerged from the papers supporting the notion that changes occurred in the doctoral students' paradigm of educational leadership and resulted in a change in their leadership practices. This study supports the importance of utilizing self-reflection, the theme of the second article, as a best practice in promoting principal candidates to integrate their evolving theories into practice.

Robert A. Rich and Sherion H. Jackson focus on the importance of cultivating reflective administrative practices through principal mentoring programs in the second research article in this issue. The authors discuss the skills and attributes that the supervisor should possess such as strong leadership and communication skills and the willingness to acknowledge the individual's own need for growth in reflective and administrative practices. Rich and Jackson recommend that the supervisor should use a variety of reflective approaches including one-on-one conferences and team dialogue. Elements necessary in setting a trusting and open climate are presented, as well as the mutual benefits of participating in a mentoring program.

In the third article, Trampas S. Bass discusses the results of a new research study on the barriers and motivators of principal preparation students' decisions to enter the principalship upon completion of their degree or certification program. The survey, composed of 19 principalship inhibitor statements and 14 motivator statements, was distributed to 52 schools throughout 28 states and yielded a total of 860 useable surveys from participants. The results designate stress as the top barrier to becoming a principal, followed by increased time, commitment, and pressures from standardized tests scores. The top three motivators included desiring to make a difference, having a positive impact on people and students, and having the opportunity to initiate change. The shortage of principal candidates is frequently discussed by administrators and educators, and the research has provided some insight into the factors that contribute to this trend. Bass's study fills a gap in the literature and provides answers to the questions about the cause behind this discouraging trend; perhaps the first step in changing the role of the principalship into a more desirable position.

Edward P. Cox examines the pros and cons of performance-based incentive pay for superintendents, a movement several states have already adopted. His survey of 52 superintendents with pay performance clauses in their contracts revealed that 75% of participants viewed the incentive as positive. Although 62.5% of the superintendents reported that they did not encounter any problems

as a result of the performance incentive, some problems that were encountered included frequency and quality of communication with the board, the perception that others felt this type of pay was not justified, and unrealistic goals set by the school board.

In the next research article, I. Philip Young presents two constructs, the relative value and the absolute value of salaries, that a superintendent should consider before advising the school board on how to determine teacher pay scales. The relative value of salaries is determined by obtaining data from a similar labor market comprised of several school districts. The absolute value can be established by using either a point estimate, determined by experience and education, or an average cost perspective, determined by the average amount paid to teachers in a relevant labor market. Young concludes by suggesting the advantages of using each method to achieve individual goals of the district.

In an article on best practices, A. Douglas Eury and Vicky F. Ratchford support the theory that schools operate more effectively with shared decision-making based on research and their combined 16 years of leadership experience. The authors offer suggestions for principals to consider when working with school leadership teams. Their advice is broken up into several categories including establishing the vision, verifying the mission, belonging to the team, appropriately determining who makes the decisions, making sure the appropriate information is available, accurately interpreting and applying data, and accepting the responsibility of accountability.

In our last article of this issue, the best practices of becoming a better school leader are discussed by Judith A. Zimmerman. She uses the challenges associated with becoming a better skier as a metaphor for the challenges to becoming a better administrator. Many of the same skills, such as getting fit, having the right equipment, preparing, practicing, accepting feedback, and visualizing success, that are necessary to improve one's skiing abilities are also necessary to improve leadership abilities. Zimmerman ascertains that by creating metaphors, people can shed new light on existing problems or situations and effectively implement change.

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## Changing Leadership Paradigms and Practices of Doctoral Students

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### Introduction

In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration concluded that educational leadership preparation programs in the United States were marked by a “lack of collaboration between school districts and universities . . . and lack of . . . modern content . . .” (Milstein & Krueger, 1997, p. 101). Echoing this concern, scholars, such as Joseph Murphy (1999, 2002), have argued for a programmatic change that emphasizes teaching and learning under the umbrella of school improvement. This criticism that graduate programs are not bridging the gap between scholarly theory and practice has been the catalyst for re-examining master’s and doctoral programs “to meet the needs of the society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000, p. 2).

Universities have responded to this concern by implementing scholar-practitioner programs which are generally identified by an emphasis on merging theory and practice rather than maintaining them as two separate entities. School improvement, democratic community, and social justice are key components (Jackson & Kelly, 2001; Murphy, 2002). Thus, the dialogue to redefine educational leadership

programs has resulted in university professors becoming “bridge scholars who can effectively carry that critique closer to the practice of teaching and learning and the practice of leading schools” (Starratt, 2004, p. 265).

Freire (1970) argued that the very essence of dialogue resonates with both reflection and action. In other words there is no “true word that is not at the same time a praxis” (p. 68). More importantly, human beings are challenged to say the “true word – which is work, which is praxis – to transform the world” (p. 69). More recently, Foster (1986) reiterated this connection between reflection and action by noting the importance of changing the paradigm of educational leadership through engaging in discourse about the direction of leadership when it is “concerned with how lives should be lived” (p. 57). This emphasis challenges programs to become more transformative in nature. Therefore, this qualitative study explored the notion of changing paradigms of leadership among doctoral students and resultant changes in practice by utilizing doctoral student semi-structured reflective writing as the primary source of data.

Research questions were:

1. As students learn about educational leadership, does their paradigm of leadership change?
2. If so, does this change result in changing practice?
3. Does the changing practice result in school improvement?

### Study Setting and Design

The educational leadership program at a regional university in Texas was a new Ed.D. cohort program which prepared students to be scholar-practitioners. The 16 students in this study had completed 24 hours of core doctoral classes and were enrolled in a summer session that consisted of a field internship and a seminar synthesis class.

Students in the program were reminded of the importance for educators “to be on a quest for a better state of things for those we teach and for the world we share” (Greene, 1995, p. 38). In order to do this, they reflected orally and in writing on their beliefs and practices - an act of inquiry which allows educators to create and recreate their professional lives (Hargreaves, 1997). Consistently coursework and readings by Dewey, Starratt, Noddings, Wheatley, Freire, and many others emphasized the challenge to become school leaders who would “do things differently” (Hackney & Henderson, 1999, p. 68). In other words educators must be “able to understand . . . the interdependence necessary to achieve the task of making a difference in the lives of students” (p. 68). Throughout coursework, content had emphasized critical theory, democratic schooling, change processes, ethics, school improvement, and inquiry systems. Consequently, class discussions emphasized what these theories looked like when implemented on the school campus and suggested and identified strategies to do so.

Sixteen doctoral students participated in this study with an equal representation of male and female. Nine students were principals or assistant principals, four worked in a district-level capacity, and three were teachers. Twelve of the students worked in a rural area in Texas, one worked in a suburban city near a metropolitan area in Texas, and three students worked in an urban area in Louisiana. All of the students were white, except for one African-American male.

Doctoral students were asked to develop a 10 – 12 page paper that reflected a synthesis of all coursework up to that time. The following were guiding questions and provided the basis for the study:

- This is what I believed.
- This is what my practice looked like then.
- This is what I believe now.
- This is what my practice looks like now.

Content analysis was the primary analytical method employed to analyze the data inductively. Student papers were read for emerging themes using an open coding process as described by Creswell (1998). Common themes were categorized accordingly.

### Findings

As students described critical incidents in their lives professionally and personally, four themes emerged suggesting that changes occurred in their leadership paradigms and this led to changing practices which resulted in students becoming more equipped to lead school improvement. These themes were:

- Increasing personal capacity
- Recognizing the need for authenticity
- Nurturing an enhanced sensitivity to others
- Embracing the unfinished business of learning

*Paradigm of leadership changed with students' increasing personal capacity*

Several of the students wrote about fears that they could not bring about school improvement. Yet, despite “feeling very small,” their desire to continue learning, to expand their experiences, and to bring more “significance to their life,” they persevered in the program and in attempting to bring change to their schools. In this way they realized that their personal capacity for learning, for new experiences, and for influencing schools was far greater than they had imagined. As one student pointed out:

“Little did I comprehend that much of my foundational knowledge and practice would be challenged ... only to be reconstructed into a deeper search for meaning, self-analysis, and a renewed sense of destiny.”

Students noted that they had to “take a stand based on [their] own perception of these beliefs and values” which required courage. Through building relationships with other cohort members and through growing understandings of the power of dialogue and reflection, their capacity for courage increased. The struggle to increase personal capacity resulted in a changing dynamic understanding of their own potential capacity to learn more and do more.

In a variety of ways, students described how “new learning provided the spark that resulted in an inner fire in me to question policies and curricula that are present in education today.” This led to changing leadership paradigms in the following areas:

- Increased Understanding of Self – As one student wrote, “I learned more about myself during this period of academic growth . . . in relationships, courage, conviction and commitment, reflection, and authenticity.”

- Care Ethic – This was discussed in the “wider possibilities of the caring teacher” and the notion of grace in education “that must restructure my foundational philosophy about the significant role of relationships in the educational profession.”
- Spirituality – Students developed a broader understanding of spirituality. One student noted, “before entering a doctoral program I defined spirituality in the narrow sense of religion . . . [now I define it as] the web of interconnectedness present when one’s spirit, in the profound realities of life, connects in a meaningful and empowering relationship to the spirit of another to produce a spark of life.”
- Ethical and Moral Leadership – Several students wrote of their new ability to “reconstruct the very basis of ethical choice from maintaining and sustaining personal ethics in a challenging educational climate to accepting the responsibility of creating an ethical institution.”
- Empowerment – Students noted an enhanced understanding of “empowering leadership” which led them to embrace more collaborative leadership styles and move from “isolation, toward harmony.”
- Democratic leadership – Students emphasized a renewed commitment to the belief that changes in the education process “had more potential for a lasting and positive impact if they occurred in the context of promoting democratic values.”

- Creating a Sense of Community – As leadership paradigms changed, students wrote of the need to “become an invitational leader ... to create a community that invite[s] all children to the table of education ...”
- Creating a Culture of Social Justice – This became a focused goal for all of the students. As one student admitted, “Being from a background that could be characterized as ‘closed-minded,’ [now] I see just how culture and social status can affect our treatment and opinions of other societies and cultures.”

*Leadership practices changed with students acknowledging the need for authenticity*

Authenticity begins when we understand who we are and the importance of our “walk matching our talk.” For example, one student realized that to truly be an authentic leader who cared for all students, she must connect education with career awareness. This led her to re-structure the high school program to include a greater awareness of career possibilities.

Another student noted that her “attitude toward [late homework] became one of desire to be equitable and just and more caring.” She began working with a student who was continuously late by helping him “make up work that he had missed during another time period, but not at recess.” Another student pointed out that as her own need for control changed, she began to realize the “empowerment of teamwork.”

Understanding the need to be authentic was the catalyst for a student to develop a model for teachers to follow called the “3 R’s of teacher-leaders: Research, Reflection, and Relationships.” He noted the importance of

leaders “actively engage[ing] everyone in a vision of what positive changes could occur when [this] cycle is enabled. Another student commented that in order to create a sense of community it was necessary to nurture and sustain authentic practices.

Several students wrote about the dilemma of an authentic concern for students and the current emphasis on standardized testing. Each of these students decided to emphasize quality teaching for every student, knowing that this would include appropriate testing strategies rather than “play[ing] the state’s accountability game” and emphasizing testing techniques alone.

*Changes led to school improvement by nurturing an enhanced sensitivity to others*

As students developed deeper understandings of others, they articulated an almost spiritual zeal to build better, stronger, more caring relationships with others. As one student wrote, “I must uncover the distortions that exist in our language and our view of the world. . . If I am truly committed to children then I must critique the present order and I must believe that change is possible.”

A student described the changes that she helped initiate for the school to become more inclusive. Before school started, she “met with special education teachers and listened to their ideas regarding how to allow the students to remain in general educational settings for a greater percentage of the day.” Another student collaborated with other district personnel to write a grant which enabled school staff to access staff development opportunities.

Becoming sensitive to others speaks the “true essence of why I teach,” wrote a student, as he explained how he had come to understand that “teaching is not about me; it is about the students.” This sensitivity to others led another



to restructure cheerleader try outs at his school. Another student became acutely aware of her responsibility to help create students who are “dreamers of possible utopias.” One student echoed this as he wrote, “I am becoming more aware of issues of education and race.”

### *Changes led to school improvement by embracing the “unfinishedness” of learning*

Nearly every student wrote about their awareness of the “unfinishedness” of learning. As one student noted, “I am an unfinished piece of work and know that my evolution is a never-ending progression.” This very process of identifying that they would always be unfinished, served as a catalyst to continue learning, to continue looking for ways to improve schools for all students. A student wrote eloquently “I reflected on the person that I was and I know that I will never be that person again. I question the person that I am right now.” As doctoral student leadership paradigms changed regarding knowledge, their ever-growing capacity for diverse experiences increased and practices were transformed.

### **Conclusion**

There are few studies that underscore just how belief systems or values influence a leader’s

practice (Hafner, 2005), however, research on the relationship between an educator’s beliefs and subsequent practices suggests that it is the belief system that determines what is important to an individual and resulting practice is an outcome of the belief landscape (Collinson, 1996). For example, Reyes, Scribner, and Parades-Scribner (1999) provided an example of this when they described high performing Hispanic schools and noted that the belief system of these school leaders played an important role in changing practices which led to greater achievement for their students.

The doctoral student writers of these essays were professional educators who aspired to participate in authentic learning with the goal of improving schools. Their essays described how already good educators became even better educators, how they changed their practices at school, became more caring, more intuitive to campus needs, more sensitive to the moral and ethical dilemmas of schooling, more welcoming of diversity, and more empowering. As students documented their renewed passions for education, it became evident that paradigms of leadership can change and that this leads to changing leadership practices which result in school improvement.

### **Author Biography**

Dr. Sandra Harris is associate professor at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas where she is director of the Center for Doctoral Studies in Educational Leadership. She has published many articles in professional journals on research topics that emphasize leadership in education. She is the author of several books, including *Changing Mindsets of Educational Leaders to Improve Schools* (Rowan and Littlefield Education), *BRAVO Principal* and *BRAVO Teacher* (Eye on Education), and *Best Practices of Award-Winning Elementary Principals* and *Best Practices of Award-Winning Secondary Principals* (Corwin).

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## Building the Reflective Capacity of Practicing Principals

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### Implications

Reflection is often used as a professional development tool in coaching and mentoring leaders. Outside of education, research is underway to learn how managers can develop as learning facilitators in the workplace (Chivers, 2003). However, the current focus on learning communities and learning organizations within education makes reflective thinking particularly relevant for school principals and their supervisors.

Reflection is essential to administrator capacity to think about and improve upon practice as well as challenge internal faulty perceptions and beliefs. In a professional development setting, a supervisor of school principals has the opportunity to play a pivotal role in leading them toward a deeper understanding of self, work roles, and performance (Griffith & Frieden, 2000; Lee & Barnett, 1994). In particular, reflective thinking helps principals see gaps in their knowledge base and problem-solving skills, as well as leads to creative solutions. The consistent practice of reflective thinking is key to the development of expertise and effective administration. In effect, supervisors can move principals from being novice problem solvers to expert problem

solvers through the development of reflective thinking (Hart, 1990).

Notably, studies indicate that expert principals are better problem solvers than novice principals in part because their developed, reflective ability equips them to: 1) consider a wider array of variables, 2) recognize constraints as surmountable, 3) give more attention to planning, and 4) avoid fear associated with the consequences of their actions (Barnett, 1995; Schon, 1983). Copland (2003) reported that repeated exposure to, and practice with a problem-solving process similar to the process incorporated in problem-based learning, is associated with increased ability to frame administrative problems. Additional qualitative data suggested that problem-framing skills learned in a reflective or problem-based process transfer into practice and are crucial to daily work. Since reflection is a primary catalyst for developing expertise in problem solving (Barnett, 1995), the implications are that problem solving cannot occur without reflective thinking. Therefore, in order to supervise effectively, reflection should be cultivated.

## Supervisor Readiness

Such expertise is not simply a by-product of asking a few reflective questions. The level of intensity and effort required to facilitate reflective thinking in a collaborative manner is surprisingly high (Hart, 1993). According to Schein (1978), a mentor must successfully serve as a teacher, coach, trainer, role model, protector, and sponsor. Such a tall order calls for someone who engages their leadership responsibilities with what Daresh and Playko (1991) characterized as “a deep sense of wanting to serve others and to provide expertise to professionals” (p. 27).

Along with the desire to serve others and provide expertise, a supervisor must be seen as credible and qualified by the principals they mentor in order to lead them through reflective thinking (Dalton & Hollenbeck, 1996). School leaders want their mentors to have the knowledge and skills that they themselves will need to face the challenges of school leadership. A recent study by Gooden and Spencer (2003) indicated that having strong leadership abilities and high expectations are two of the most important professional characteristics that a principal supervisor or principal mentor can possess. Additionally, respondents to the survey indicated that the ideal mentor should be a strong curriculum leader, an effective manager, and should demonstrate knowledge of policies and practices.

Effective, credible principal supervisors require ongoing training and practice that is based on their individual needs, skills, and readiness to collaborate and lead principals in adopting reflective practices. This level of leadership calls for supervisors who are 1) willing and able to recognize their own need for continual growth in skills such as formulating and asking questions, 2) designing and conducting reflective activities, 3) utilizing well-developed communication skills, 4)

facilitating needs analysis, 5) using a variety of evaluation instruments, 6) planning for growth, observing, and listening (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). Supervisors who do not possess these skills and training must be encouraged to seek out this training and to develop skills necessary to promote the reflective thinking process.

## Variety of Approach

As one might imagine, reflective expertise is not developed through the repeated use of a single approach. Rather, several different approaches have been outlined in the literature. One often-cited approach uses a three-step model. The supervisor begins by having a planning conference with the principal. The supervisor then sets aside time to observe the principal in the course of his or her duties. After the observation, the supervisor and principal engage in a one-on-one reflective conference (Lee & Barnett, 1994). More specific to the conference stage, facilitators may choose to prompt reflective thinking through diagnostic questioning, Socratic questioning, journal writing, synthesis, or brainstorming. At times, the simple question *why* has had a powerful impact when pressed along with specific probes (Griffith & Frieden, 2000; Hart, 1993).

Reflection does not always have to be limited to a one-to-one arrangement. Powerful reflection and collaboration is also possible when educators engage in professional dialogue with each other in small groups. Appropriate questioning creates opportunities for individuals to reflect aloud, to be heard by one or more colleagues, and to be prompted to expand and extend thinking through follow-up questions or probes (Lee & Barnett, 1994). For example, site-based decision making or leadership teams are continually challenged by the demands for school improvement.

Some areas of concern that school leadership teams have identified for reflective

dialogue include: 1) improving achievement, 2) enhancing discipline, 3) maintaining safety, and 4) involving parents. The opportunity for leadership team members to discuss evaluation information and reflect together is essential to successful collaboration. In this manner, teams participate in the reflective process. From the literature, it appears that this type of reflective dialogue regarding data has been a powerful dimension in the school improvement process (Strahan, Jewell, & Ward, 2001).

Reflection is often an informal process using a specific approach or a combination of the one-on-one model and team dialogue approach. Such opportunity for variety offers hope for supervisors of large numbers of principals, who may struggle to find the necessary time needed to spend with each principal. Peer-led efforts such as the Peer Assisted Leadership (PALS) program developed at the Far West Laboratory provide a reflective framework supporting reflective thinking while remaining time-friendly for principal supervisors (Barnett, 1990).

This approach affords principals the opportunity to gain self-knowledge and obtain peer support by shadowing one another and engaging in reflective interviewing. This particular approach also offers networking opportunities for those involved in this interviewing process. The literature suggests that reflective thinking can be facilitated from a variety of approaches (Griffith & Taraban, 2002; Griffith & Frieden, 2000; Grogan & Roberson, 2002; Howley, Chadwick, & Howley, 2002). Therefore, supervisors of principals should carefully consider all of the contingencies at play in their learning communities when planning reflective activities and practices.

### **Appropriate Climate**

Because reflection often involves personal risk, a climate of trust is essential. A recent survey

of principal-mentors and interns revealed that the respondents ranked the ability to develop a trusting relationship and to maintain confidentiality as highly important (Gooden & Spencer, 2003). Trust is supported by establishing a non-judgmental stance during reflective and collaborative interactions. For example, for questioning to be truly reflective, the supervisor must respect the principal's statements, suspend judgment, and avoid attempts to manipulate the principal's thinking (Lee & Barnett, 1994). Additional core conditions that must be maintained include confidentiality of all parties involved, the opportunity for both parties to prepare in advance, and an extended uninterrupted period of time for reflection and dialogue. There also needs to be a relaxed power balance between participants so that the principal will feel comfortable enough to reveal true professional practice, thoughts, beliefs, and learning. For example, the supervisor might choose to balance the power by opting to meet informally at a neutral location such as a local restaurant instead of the school office.

When principals find that revealing their true thoughts and feelings can be done without fear of judgment, they are more able to process questions in greater depth. Additionally, it is helpful for the supervisor to use a neutral tone of voice, incorporate active listening skills, and refrain from giving advice (Chivers, 2003; Lee & Barnett, 1994) in order to foster an appropriate climate for reflective thinking.

### **Mutual Benefit**

Cultivating principal capacity to engage in reflective practices is not completely altruistic. Supervisors also often profit from the reflective exchange. Hopkins-Thompson (2000) reported that there are several advantages for the supervisor as well. Working with others has been shown to improve supervisor performance by causing them to sharpen and reflect upon

their own skills. Additionally, supervisors have often reported an intrinsic feeling of increased status, positive self-esteem, and a sense of reward from helping others. Zoe-Boon (1998) reported that principal mentors in Singapore, and their protégés, mutually valued and benefited from the mentor-protégé relationship. In particular, Zoe-Boon (1998) indicated that the mentors derived much satisfaction from the process of socializing their less experienced counterparts into their new role. Similarly, results from the study of a peer-coaching model indicated that both those that served as coaches and those that were coached all benefited in several ways. Mutual benefits included the ability to: 1) reduce isolation, 2) improve administrative skills through collaboration, 3) work smarter, 4) share successful practices, 5) transfer knowledge to the workplace, 6) show connections between decisions and consequences, 7) and in general, be more reflective (Speck & Krovetz, 1996). In a sense, the more that reflective thinking provides benefit for the coached, the more benefit derived by the supervisor.

The idea of this relationship being of mutual benefit is important because many leaders do not see themselves as developers of those that they supervise. In particular, leaders often perceive themselves as lacking needed skills, see the responsibility of helping develop others as a distraction from other obligations, or assume that it is someone else's responsibility (Honey, 1995). If the notion of mutual benefit is leveraged appropriately,

reluctant supervisors may very well accept the responsibility to grow their principals in hope that they, too, will cultivate a higher level of knowledge and skill.

### Conclusion

Evans (1996) pointed out that the numerous demands placed upon them, “decreases school leaders’ sense of efficiency and heightens their feelings of isolation, insecurity, and inadequacy” (p. 156). Evans added that virtually all of the principals that he encountered, “acknowledge that their professional lives have grown more complicated and less satisfying” (p. 156). This is an alarming trend, considering that school principals have been identified as influential factors in promoting excellence in education (Barnett, 1990). The struggles of the principalship include challenges that endure far beyond university preparation programs and first year principal mentor support systems. Supervisors of practicing principals are in a unique position to help principals increase their capacity to reflect upon their own practices, thinking, beliefs, and their manner of making sense of the daily struggles of the principalship, while gaining and refining their own knowledge and skill through reflection during this process. Facilitating reflective thinking through mentoring or coaching is a necessary and useful process that supervisors of practicing principals can continually utilize to help reduce isolation and improve administrative skills along with improving student learning.

### Author Biographies

Mr. Robert Rich is currently a graduate assistant at Texas A&M University-Commerce as he completes doctoral studies in the field of educational administration. He has served as a bilingual teacher, campus principal, and instructional consultant. Research and publication interests include reflective thinking, the principalship, and organizational health. Recent publications include a practitioner's article in *Principal* magazine on reflective thinking in the principalship.

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## To Be or Not To Be: Issues Influencing Educators' Decisions to Enter the Principalship

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### Introduction

The position of the principal has evolved into a complex role burdened with responsibilities. Rising principal resignations and retirement rates, combined with reports of school districts beginning the school year with temporary principals, support the belief of a principal shortage. The underlying assumption in the literature is that performing the job of principal has become unappealing (Young & Creighton, 2002). Although educational publications report principal shortages, a closer examination of the literature reveals that states are actually certifying more than enough administrators to fill principal vacancies (Boehlert & O'Connell, 1999; Joerger, 2000; McAdams, 1998; Tirozzi & Ferrandino, 2001; Young & Creighton, 2002).

Not only have the number of university and private organizations offering fast-track administration degrees exploded, thereby qualifying more educators to enter principal positions quickly, but several states have eliminated and reduced the requirements for obtaining administrative credentials, thus increasing certified but not necessarily quality administrators (Anderson, 1991; Tucker & Coddling, 2002; Young & Creighton, 2002).

Many educators, even those possessing administrative certificates, are simply choosing not to enter the principalship due to the lack of compensation, stress, and time requirements of the job (Educational Research Service [ERS], 1998).

Despite the principalship being perceived as frustrating and exhaustive, most principals find satisfaction in their jobs (ERS, 2000). The principalship has often been characterized as stimulating, demanding, and rewarding (Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998). Because of these attributes, many principals are intrinsically motivated to remain in their jobs (Moore, 2000).

Although inhibitor studies associated with the principalship considerably outnumber motivator studies, only one other national study (Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe, & Melton, 1993) has explored motives for pursuing the principalship. For reasons unknown, motivating factors related to the principalship have seldom been studied on a national level. Consequently, additional descriptive research encompassing larger populations on a national scope is needed to improve on previous studies related to

inhibiting factors and especially motivating factors of the principalship.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A recent study conducted by Harris, Arnold, Lowery, & Crocker (2000) combined with Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory shaped the conceptual framework for this study. Harris et al. (2000) surveyed 151 graduate students enrolled in principal preparation courses. The respondents ranked paperwork and bureaucracy, increased time demands, potential litigation, accountability pressures, and insufficient salary as the most compelling inhibitors influencing educators' decisions to enter a principal position. The top motivating factors to principalship entry perceived by the students were having a positive impact, making a difference, being personally challenged, being professionally challenged, and receiving an increased salary.

An explanation of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory provides insight regarding what motivates educators to enter the principalship. Herzberg (1959) theorized that factors such as company policy, supervision, work conditions, interpersonal relations with co-workers and supervisors, salary, job security, and personal life were hygiene factors only capable of producing short-term changes in job attitudes, behaviors, and performance. He concluded that the most powerful motivators linked to good long-term performance and satisfaction were achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth.

According to Herzberg (1959), people work to meet lower-level needs (e.g., physiological needs, social needs) and higher-level needs (e.g., growth needs, achievement needs, recognition needs, advancement needs, etc.). Educators are attracted to the principalship because performing the principal's role gives educators opportunities to

meet higher-level needs at work as they serve others, positively impact students and teachers' lives, and achieve. The high degree of intrinsic rewards that accompany the role of the principal far outweighs the negative factors associated with the principalship (Malone, Sharp, & Thompson, 2000).

### **Current Study**

The purpose for this article is to report and discuss the findings of a recent national study that investigated (a) why educators choose not to enter the principalship and (b) what factors might motivate educators to enter the principalship (Bass, 2004). The intent for this study is to add to existing knowledge and literature regarding the most compelling factors that might inhibit or motivate educators to seek the principalship.

#### *Limitations*

Research is often constrained or limited by certain factors that emerge during a study. The researcher could not control the participants' willingness to correctly complete and return the surveys. Additionally, the researcher could not control for respondents' honesty and accuracy with regard to their perceptions.

#### *Assumptions*

Five assumptions were present in this study. The first assumption was that the students enrolled in educational leadership courses would provide valuable insights as to why educators choose to avoid or enter principal positions. A second assumption was that participant responses would reflect the true opinions of the respondents. A third assumption was that the subjects' perceptions would be representative of the general population. A fourth assumption was that all educational administration students who were present during the administration of the survey instrument completed the survey. A fifth assumption was that the methods of data collection and analysis used in this study would

produce reliable information that would be valuable to leaders in school districts, state departments of education, and principal preparation programs.

### *Methodology*

In order to address the two research questions, a survey methodology was selected for collecting data regarding the attitudes and perceptions held by a large number of students participating in graduate-level educational administration courses from University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) universities across the nation. The UCEA is an organization of 71 member institutions that prepare administrators for education administrative positions. The researcher relied on information found in the UCEA website information directory, university websites, and Creighton, Lunenburg, Irby, and Nie's (2004) *Educational Administration Directory 2003-2004* published by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) to identify individual professors who taught educational administration courses.

Professors were initially contacted by telephone, email, or both before questionnaires were sent out, in order to secure their

willingness to administer surveys to one of their educational administration classes. After agreeing to participate, the professors were mailed survey packets containing a classroom set of student surveys to be administered to their students and a return envelope with prepaid postage for returning surveys to the researcher.

### *Participants*

A total of 957 surveys were distributed to the students participating in principal preparation courses by individual professors from 52 of the 71 UCEA member institutions (73%) representing 28 different states. Of those surveys, 940 were mailed and 17 were administered online using Formsite.com. Twenty-nine of the surveys were discarded and not analyzed due to participants not correctly completing the questionnaires. A total of 860 useable surveys were returned from the student group resulting in a 93% return rate. Table 1 presents the demographic data collected from the student group. These students, all enrolled in principal preparation courses, were considered to be a valid population for this study because they were the group who would most likely face the decision to enter or avoid the principalship.

Table 1.

*Summary of Student Demographic Data (N = 860)*

Variable	Number in subset	% of students
Gender		
Female	524	61%
Male	336	39%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	688	80%
African American	68	8%
Hispanic	62	7%
Asian	13	2%
Other	29	3%
Teaching Experience		
Elementary	297	35%
Middle school	221	26%
High school	302	35%
Other	40	4%

### *Instrumentation*

The instrument used in this study was a third generation questionnaire that was built and modified from the work of both Moore and Ditzhazy (1999) and Harris et al. (2000). This instrument consisted of three sections. The first section requested that the participants respond to three demographic statements including: (1) gender, (2) ethnicity, and (3) grade-level teaching experience. Section two contained 19 principalship inhibitor statements in a four-point Likert-type format. The subjects responded whether they disagreed or agreed with the statement, where one represented strongly disagree and four represented strongly agree. Section three required the participants to

respond to 14 principalship motivator variables in the same Likert-type format.

The fact that the instrument had been used twice before and rendered similar results confirmed the instrument's validity and reliability. The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha within the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to measure the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument. Alpha scores at or above .70 suggest a high degree of reliability and internal consistency among variables (Nunnally, 1978). Since the instrument rendered an Alpha of .8018, the instrument was considered to be internally consistent.

### *Data analysis*

The student data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive procedures. Measures of central tendency and measures of variability were used to compare and rank the mean responses of the students in relation to each of the inhibiting and motivating factors influencing educators' decisions to assume principal positions.

### *Findings*

#### *Inhibitors*

Table 2 presents, in descending rank order, the students' perceptions of factors that discourage educators from entering the principalship. The student group cited stress as the top barrier to

principalship entry. Considerable literary evidence exists affirming the demanding, high-stress nature of performing the job of principal (ERS, 1998; Groff, 2001; Tirozzi, 2001). Unrealistic expectations and work conditions combined with a lack of monetary incentives have led to shrinking highly qualified principal applicant pools (Price, 2004). The student group's perception of stress as the top barrier may indicate that they view the principalship as a job that will complicate their professional lives and diminish their quality of life. It is also possible that the students enrolled in principal preparation courses may believe they are not prepared to assume the stressful duties and responsibilities of the principalship.

Table 2.

*Principalship Inhibitors as Perceived by Students (N = 860)*

Rank	Inhibiting factors	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Increased stress	3.12	.633
2	Increased time commitment (more meetings, longer day etc.)	3.10	.745
3	Pressures from standardized test scores	3.06	.722
4	Family responsibilities	2.99	.696
5	Excessive paperwork	2.99	.716
6	Bureaucracy makes it difficult to complete tasks	2.87	.683
7	Potential litigation	2.80	.726
8.	Political pressure influencing your actions	2.77	.726
9	No tenure (lack of security)	2.66	.719
10	Salary not sufficient when considering the extra responsibilities	2.66	.741
11	Distance from students	2.65	.759
12	Discipline problems	2.63	.766
13	Lack of autonomy/freedom	2.55	.685
14	Isolation/alienation from staff	2.54	.712
15	Longer year/longer term contract	2.50	.720
16	Fear of failure	2.46	.733
17	Possibility of relocation	2.44	.740
18	Concerns for personal safety	2.00	.625
19	Discouraged by family and friends	1.98	.634



The second highest inhibitor recognized by the students was increased time commitment (more meetings, longer day etc.). Principals work 60 to 80 hours a week supervising staff members, disciplining students, dealing with central-office priorities, handling parent concerns, and attending school board meetings and other extracurricular events (Hertling, 2001). Noteworthy to mention is that the students did not perceive working the longer term contract or a longer year as a significant issue. Hence, the student group preferred to work a longer term contract rather than excessive hours each day. Perhaps, the student group perceived working additional hours each day as reducing their personal and family time.

The third leading barrier perceived by the respondents inhibiting principalship entry was pressures from standardized test scores. This finding was predictable due to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 that drastically increased testing accountability pressures for principals and teachers. The student group, which also identified the lack of tenure as the ninth most compelling barrier, could possibly associate unrealistic accountability pressures being linked to job security. Because of high-stakes testing, principal tenure is now linked to student performance (Gregg & Weaver, 2000). Principals ensuring student success is no easy task considering the increased numbers of diverse, at-risk students (Asch, 1999).

### *Motivators*

Table 3 presents the motivating factors that students perceived would encourage educators to enter principal positions. The student group

clearly perceived the intrinsic service-oriented reasons of desiring to make a difference, having a positive impact on people and students, and having the opportunity to initiate change as three of the top motives for seeking a principal position. The students perceived that by entering the principalship they would be able to have more of a positive impact on teachers, students, and the entire school organization than they would as a teacher.

Principals have the power to impact the lives of teachers and students positively by hiring, committing to staff development, and providing a supportive environment for teachers and students (Newman & Wehlage, 1995). There is wide agreement supported by both research and observation that effective principal leadership is critical to high-achieving schools (ERS, 2000; Hopkins, 2000; Mawhinney, 2003). For principals, the desire to positively impact people's lives is similar to the reasons why they entered the teaching profession initially (National Education Association, 1997).

Student responses also indicated that achievement issues including the personal challenge of the principalship and the professional challenge of the job are perceived as two of the primary motives for assuming a principal position. The students perceive the principalship as a demanding job that would challenge them personally and professionally. The student responses could indicate that the students perceive the principalship as a more stimulating and challenging job when compared to teaching.

Table 3.

*Principalship Motivators as Perceived by Students (N = 860)*

Rank	Inhibiting factors	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Desire to make a difference	3.45	.538
2	Positive impact on people and students	3.38	.548
3	Personal challenge	3.38	.563
4	Ability to initiate change	3.36	.590
5.	Professional challenge	3.35	.559
6	Increased salary and benefits	3.18	.623
7	Teacher of teachers	3.10	.655
8	Stepping stone to higher positions	3.00	.665
9.	Influence over staffing	2.94	.626
10	Support and encouragement from others	2.85	.640
11	Prestige and status	2.72	.740
12	Increased freedom in daily routine	2.58	.715
13	Desire to leave the classroom	2.51	.836
14	Relocate to a more desirable location	2.34	.620

### Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, seven recommendations are presented to encourage talented educators to pursue administrative positions. First, all efforts to improve the principalship should first begin with targeting principal preparation programs. The inhibiting

factors the respondents identified indicate that principal preparation programs are not adequately preparing aspiring principals to deal with the stress, increased time commitment, accountability pressures, and excessive paperwork principals must endure as they

perform their daily duties. Therefore, principal preparation programs must combine meaningful coursework with an extensive internship experience whereby students are allowed to participate in real-life simulations and case studies they will face as principal in the future (Edmonson, 2003).

Second, the principal's job description should be rewritten to reflect realistic expectations that can be met without diminishing the principal's health and family life. Third, efforts must be made by school leaders to restructure the job responsibilities of the principal to ensure that the principal has adequate time to place more emphasis on curriculum and instruction and less emphasis on managerial tasks associated with the budget, legal matters, and additional district-level responsibilities. Fourth, if school districts are to attract and retain the best and brightest candidates for the job, school leaders must continue offering principal salary and benefits packages that match the responsibility of the principalship. Fifth, school district leaders in the future must work cooperatively with

university professors to develop programs to identify, recruit, and support (i.e., mentoring, encouraging) quality aspiring educators seeking the principalship. Sixth, practicing principals should be provided with networking opportunities and ongoing professional development focused on effective strategies to improve student learning.

This study described student perceptions of inhibiting and motivating factors that influence educators' decisions to seek principal positions. The reasons educators are attracted to such an ill-perceived position is because the principalship gives individuals opportunities to serve others, impact students and teachers' lives, and achieve. These service and achievement-oriented aspects that accompany performing the job of principal offer a high degree of intrinsic rewards. As long as the motivating factors for assuming a principal position outweigh the negative aspects of the principalship, there will be adequate numbers of effective, highly-qualified principals to lead schools.

### Author Biography

Trampas Bass received his Doctorate of Educational Leadership (Ed.D.) from Sam Houston State University in December 2004. His research earned him the 2004 Jack Staggs Dissertation Award. Dr. Bass is the author of *A Gender-Based Study of Issues Influencing Men and Women's Decisions To Enter the Principalship* (Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration, 2006) and the coauthor of *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Pregnancy Related Services Program of Nacogdoches Independent School District* (Center of Research and Doctoral Studies in Educational Leadership, Sam Houston State University, 2003). Dr. Bass is the assistant principal at Hudson Middle School in Lufkin, Texas, and is a member of the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP).

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## Pay for Performance Contract Provisions for School Superintendents

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The superintendent/board relationship continues to be a subject of particular interest for those who study school leadership and those who serve in the superintendency. As a former superintendent, the author knows firsthand the importance of both the personal and legal aspects of that relationship. The personal aspects of that relationship evolve over an extended period of time. The legal aspects, however, are generally defined very early through employment contract negotiations conducted when the superintendent is initially employed. One issue that will likely be addressed during any superintendent employment discussion is the inclusion of pay for performance incentives. The widespread use of executive bonuses in the private sector as well as increasing demands for accountability have led to a strong public interest in this aspect of the superintendent's compensation package.

A 1999 nationwide survey by the National School Boards Association and George Mason University found 55% of school board members believed pay for performance incentives would indeed boost student achievement while only 35% of superintendents felt it would effectively serve that purpose (La Fee, 1999). Some states are now requiring or at least advocating such incentives. Illinois law requires that new multi-

year superintendent contracts must be linked to student performance and academic improvements in the school district (Pierson & Blair, 1998). Florida law encourages districts to design pay for performance contracts for principals as well as superintendents (Bushweller, 1999). Superintendents who oppose such arrangements need a sound rationale for their position should the board initiate such discussions. Those who favor such provisions need current information to minimize potential problems and to help fashion appropriate pay for performance packages.

### Pros & Cons Debated

Those who argue in favor of pay for performance for superintendents stress the importance of providing specific incentives for developing administrative excellence and improving student achievement. They further argue that pay for performance forces the board to clearly identify its priorities and evaluate the superintendent in accordance with those priorities. Others suggest it may serve to protect the superintendent and board against shortsighted political attacks during times of significant turbulence or change. Performance incentives may also cast the superintendent as a more progressive business-like executive in the eyes of the board and community. The perception that the superintendent has "earned"

his or her pay may reduce board level anxiety regarding the superintendent's compensation package and soften negative public reactions to executive level pay increases.

Often noted by pay for performance critics, however, is the difficulty in accurately measuring the superintendent's impact on student learning and the public misunderstanding that can occur regarding the awarding of bonuses (Eastridge, 2000). The use of subjective criteria, potential morale problems, and annual budget fluctuations are also viewed as potential problems. Young (2003) surveyed six school districts with pay for performance administrator plans and found numerous recurring concerns. Those concerns included lack of supervisor evaluation skills, inability of administrators to control their workflow, lack of knowledge regarding pay for performance, and insufficient experience with successful pay for performance systems.

Despite the lack of consensus regarding its appropriate role in education, an increasing number of school districts are including pay for performance provisions in the superintendent's contract. Districts of all sizes and types now utilize executive level merit pay. In 1999, 10% of Connecticut superintendents' contracts included such a provision (La Fee, 1999). A recent state audit in Minnesota revealed 24% of the superintendents in that state now have pay for performance (Sutton, 2003). A multi-state study in the Southeast in 2003 found pay for performance provisions in 17%, 32%, and 38% of the contracts in South Carolina, Florida, and North Carolina respectively (Cox, 2003).

How do superintendents with pay for performance provisions view them? How is it being implemented? What problems are surfacing as pay for performance increases? These were the major research questions addressed in the study of superintendent pay for

performance provisions summarized in this paper.

## Research Design

A researcher-constructed survey was used to gather information from superintendents in South Carolina, Florida, and North Carolina with pay for performance clauses in their contracts. The fifty-two superintendents included in this study were identified through an earlier survey of employment contracts. All questions addressed provisions in the 2003-2004 employment contract. Some questions sought the superintendents' opinion while others gathered specific descriptive data regarding its implementation. The 41 superintendents who responded were evenly divided between urban/suburban school districts (48%) and rural school districts (52%). Enrollment in the responding districts ranged from 2,200-48,000 students.

## Findings

### *Satisfaction & Development*

Pay for performance was viewed as a positive contract provision by 75% of the responding superintendents. In the majority of districts (64%), the board initiated and advanced the idea of pay for performance. The remaining superintendents indicated it was their idea (24%) or both parties to the contract (12%) were equally interested. The majority of superintendents (68%) implemented pay for performance provisions as merit bonuses – that is in addition to, not instead of any regular pay adjustments.

The mean amount of additional pay was \$7,150 and the range was \$2,000-\$30,000 in the responding districts. Ninety-two percent of the superintendents indicated satisfaction with the amount of the incentive. In the majority of districts (54%), pay for performance was implemented for only the superintendent. Twenty-six percent indicated other central office administrators had such arrangements,



and 22% indicated pay for performance included central office administrations and school principals.

### **Establishing & Measuring Indicators**

Specifying what is to be measured, how it will be measured, and how it will be rewarded is critical when dealing with performance-based incentives. Performance criteria reported in this study ranged from a subjective board evaluation to specific numerical improvements on a specified standardized test. The number of performance goals measured ranged from 3 to 21 and all included at least one student performance measure.

The majority of superintendents (65%) indicated pay for performance was measured through completion of pre-determined performance goals (see Table 1 below). Twenty

percent indicated the board evaluation of the superintendent was used to determine whether the superintendent had met the criteria required to trigger the additional pay. Some (7.5%) indicated improvement on one specific measure of student achievement, that measure being the district's SAT or ACT score, was the sole criteria for awarding merit pay. Others (7.5%) listed improvement on a battery of student achievement measures as the criteria for pay for performance bonuses.

Additional indicators beyond SAT/ACT scores included advanced placement results, graduation rates, dropout and retention rates, and discipline referrals. Only 8% of the superintendents believed the specified indicators or the method of measurement used was unfair.

Table 1.

*Primary Pay for Performance Criteria*

	Percentage	Frequency
Predetermined performance goals	.65	27
Board evaluation of superintendent	.20	8
Battery of student performance measures	.075	3
Single student performance measure	.075	3

**Impact and Problems**

The majority of superintendents (81%) believed that the inclusion of pay for performance in their contract had no affect on their relationship with the board of education.

The majority (64%) felt pay for performance did not have a significant impact on how they spent their professional time. Those who felt it did impact their time (36%) indicated pay for performance resulted in increased attention to board goals, particularly student academic goals.

A majority of superintendents (62.5%) felt they had not encountered any problems as a result of pay for performance incentives (see Table 2 below). One problem for some concerned the frequency and quality of communication with the board. These superintendents felt that pay for performance had increased the distance between them and the board and that the relationship now seemed more guarded. These superintendents noted increased formality in communication and less casual interaction with the board.

Table 2.

*Problems with Pay for Performance*

	Percentage	Frequency
No problems	.625	25
Communications/distance from board	.125	5
Negative perception of others	.125	5
Unrealistic goals	.125	5

A second perceived problem was the perception of others that the superintendent's performance-based pay was not necessary or justified. Teachers, principals, and the community were identified as groups that sometimes resented the superintendents' contract arrangement with their board. The uniqueness of such a provision was identified as a perceived public relations problem.

The third concern noted was the tendency of some school boards to set unrealistic goals. Superintendents with this concern noted expectations had increased but available resources had not.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

Superintendents currently operating with pay for performance provisions are in a unique

position to understand its advantages, problems, and limitations. Their views can help both those studying superintendent compensation issues and those considering implementing or expanding pay for performance plans for educational leaders. The superintendents in South Carolina, Florida, and North Carolina paint a generally positive but hardly trouble free picture.

Three out of four are satisfied with its implementation and almost two thirds have not experienced any major problems (see Table 3 below). In most cases, it did not affect their relationship with the board or how they allocated their time. It did provide a vehicle for managing their goals and evaluation and for upgrading their financial package. They are generally satisfied with both the additional

dollar amount provided and the fairness of indicators used to determine if it would be paid. As the person most directly affected, superintendents would be among the first to

note serious negative repercussions should they exist, and the majority of superintendents utilizing pay for performance in these three states did not.

Table 3.

*Satisfaction with Pay for Performance*

	Yes	No
Amount of bonus	92%	8%
Fairness of indicators	92%	8%
Satisfaction with system	75%	25%
No problems	64%	36%

Also worthy of noting is the absence of problems associated with some potentially contentious areas. A recently completed state audit of superintendent contracts in Minnesota (Sutton, 2003) cited the importance of including in the contract explicit language regarding both the criteria and the dollar amount to be awarded. A legal review of superintendent employment contracts in North Carolina also emphasized specificity of language when dealing with pay for performance provisions (McColl, 2000). While a minority of superintendents cited some problems with pay for performance, contract language was not one of them. Vague or overly general language was not viewed as an issue.

The problems that were identified were more subtle and warrant consideration by those considering pay for performance. Perceptions

of others were a point of concern. La Fee (1999) highlights the importance of molding a school culture to gain greater general acceptance for pay for performance procedures before implementing such a plan. Canada (2000) notes that pay for performance contracts can play an important role in cultivating a culture of improvement and innovation. Public familiarity and the involvement of other district administrators in such a program could affect how it is perceived, as well as its degree of acceptance and long-term success. Assessing and if necessary increasing the readiness level of school district stakeholders would be a worthwhile pre-implementation activity for those considering pay for performance. The culture, rather than the contract language, may be the real problem facing boards and superintendents who implement such a plan without preparing others.

Pay for performance is still a relatively new compensation technique in education. As more districts implement it, more detailed data will emerge regarding these important questions. In the interim, those leading districts

as well as those who study administrative compensation issues must continue gathering information. This idea and public support for it will not be going away anytime soon.

### Author Biography

Dr. Edward Cox is a former Illinois superintendent and is currently an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina. His most recent publications concerned superintendents contracts (*ERS Spectrum*) and principal preparation standards (*Connections: Journal of Principal Preparation and Standards*). He is an active member of the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA), the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA).

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## Establishing the Economic Worth of Teachers: A Superintendent's Guide for Advising School Boards\*

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**I**n a recent issue of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, Hilling (2004) described procedures for obtaining a fair compensation process for principals, and the thrust of this work was on establishing internal consistency for salaries among administrators. This article addresses similar concerns but differs in several important ways. First, the focus of this article is on salaries of teachers instead of principals, and second, the emphasis is on external equity (labor markets) rather than on internal consistency as addressed by Hilling.

Indeed, a major responsibility for all superintendents is to advise their school boards about external market parameters influencing teacher salaries. Unlike their CEO counterparts in the private sector, superintendents must do so without a profit factor on which to gauge salary data. As such, many superintendents have had typically little information on which to base their advice, and this manuscript fills this void.

It does so by recasting recent research from an experimental context to an applied setting. According to this research (Young, Delli, Miller-Smith & Buster, 2004), the salary advising process for teachers should be deconstructed at the school board level to focus on two related points of discussion. One point is the relative value of salaries, while the other point is the absolute value of salaries.

### Relative Value of Salaries

In most instances, the relative value of teacher salaries is determined by choosing a relevant labor market as a reference point. As a reference point, a relevant labor market is comprised of a collection of other school districts (object districts) purported to be similar to the target school district. Salary data obtained from these object school districts are used to operationalize loosely defined constructs of fairness, justice, and equity when formulating a position for teacher salaries.

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Often overlooked within the advising process is that object school districts comprising a particular relevant labor market can vary in very meaningful ways with different cost implications for a school district. Common ways of variation used to define a relevant labor market comprised of object school districts are size as measured by enrollments, proximity as measured by geographical location, wealth as measured by fiscal resources, and performance as measured by outcomes from proficiency tests. Further complicating this discussion is that each source of variation is grounded within established economic principles (Young & Castetter, 2004).

Established economic principles include “economy of scale” (organizational size), “supply and demand” (geographical area), “ability to pay” (fiscal resources), and “cost/benefit” (academic performance). To illustrate, underlying the use of economy of scale for defining a relevant labor market is that similar size districts share a comparable organizational structure and place similar job demands on teachers. Likewise, supply and demand assumes that within any particular geographical area there exist a certain supply of viable teachers and a certain demand for their services. To be competitive within a specific geographical area, a target school district must compensate teachers like object school districts.

Still different, are relevant labor markets defined by ability to pay and cost/benefit. Ability to pay relates to the economic resources of school districts and implies the public of a target school district should carry an economic burden similar to the publics of object school districts with “like type” fiscal resources. On the other hand, cost/benefit defines comparability for a relevant labor market on the basis of outcomes and suggests that similarly performing school

districts should pay comparable salaries to teachers.

By delineating the above described economic principles for choosing a relevant labor market, school superintendents can advise school board members in molding their definition for the relative value of teachers when considering salary offers. However, the choice of a relevant labor market by school board members on the basis of information provided by superintendents represents only part of the actual salary determination process. Another part of the actual salary determination process concerns the absolute value for teacher salaries.

### **Absolute Value of Teacher Salaries**

Within any given relevant labor market, teacher salaries can vary in some other important ways. These ways include absolute value from either a point estimate or an average cost perspective. A point estimate involves focusing on a particular cell within the existing salary schedules.

For example using a point estimate, value could be assessed for a beginning teacher with a baccalaureate degree and no creditable teaching experience. The particular combination of education and experience chosen as the focal point for a market analysis based on value will produce a unique economic worth for teachers from a point perspective.

To illustrate, suppose that value is defined by a target school district as a beginning teacher with no creditable teacher experience. Within any given relevant labor market involving object school districts, teacher value is assessed by computing an average salary rate for this particular type of teacher. This average salary rate reflects, by definition, a prevailing wage for establishing absolute worth of teacher salaries and can be



used to set all teacher salaries through an indexing system within a target school district.

In contrast to using a point estimate, another usable criterion exists. This other criterion is the average amount paid teachers in any relevant labor market. That is, absolute value is defined by an average teacher salary cost paid by a school district rather than a specific teacher cost.

To calculate the average teacher amount, total teacher salary expenditures of a district are divided by the number of full time equivalent (FTE) teachers employed. An average of these data across object school districts renders a prevailing value for the economic worth of teachers within any defined relevant labor market. This economic worth of teachers, as suggested by the average perspective will be, no doubt, different from the economic worth of teachers indicated by the point estimate. Unlike the point estimate that is sensitive only to a particular type of teacher, the average cost encapsulates the education and experience of all teachers employed by object school districts.

### **Policy Versus Empirical Choices**

Given the various definitions of relative value involving different relevant labor markets as well as of absolute value involving either a point or an average approach within a particular labor market, school board members must make specific choices when establishing the economic worth of teachers, and superintendents should so advise. Decisions made by school board members relative to the economic worth of teachers can be categorized according either to a policy choice or to an empirical choice when choosing among these alternatives, and these choices can vary between relative and absolute considerations for the economic worth of teachers. A policy choice is warranted in situations where alternatives are equally viable, and an empirical

choice is warranted in situations where a superior alternative exists.

To determine if choices associated with relative concerns (relevant labor markets) and absolute concerns (point or average) require either policy or empirical decisions on the part of school boards, an experimental study was conducted with actual public school districts to assess the economic efficiency of these different indices (Young, et. al., 2004). Economic efficiency is defined in this study as the absolute cost difference between a target school district and a particular type of relevant labor market. Most efficient is a smaller absolute cost difference, while least efficient is a larger absolute cost difference.

Within that study, three target school districts were selected at random from a large Midwestern state and 40 object school districts were identified for each target district according to the different potential relevant labor market configurations (N=120). To operationalize the different relevant labor market configurations, the following definitions were used: (a) economy of scale-average daily attendance of students, (b) supply and demand-school districts most contiguous to the object district, (c) ability to pay- median income as reported by district residents, and (d) cost/benefits- performance on a state mandated competency test. Absolute worth of teachers within each relevant labor market was examined for beginning teachers (point) and for average teacher costs (amount).

Results from that study indicate the choice of a relevant labor market is a policy as opposed to an administrative decision for certain definitions of absolute worth. When the absolute value of teacher candidates is restricted to a point estimate, no differences are detected across relevant labor markets. That is, the economic worth of teachers, as so defined,

is similar across all relevant labor market configurations.

In contrast, results from that study indicate the choice of a relevant labor market is an administrative decision when a different definition for absolute worth is used. When the economic worth of teachers is defined from an average teacher cost perspective, as opposed to beginning teacher cost, relevant labor markets are found to vary in efficiency. The least efficient relative labor market is one defined by ability to pay, while the most efficient labor market is one defined by supply and demand (geographical area).

### Conclusions

In light of the above discussion, some clear implications exist for school superintendents attempting to advise their school boards about establishing the salaries of teachers. Most importantly, these findings indicate that issues surrounding absolute worth (point/average) should be resolved before considerations are given to the choice of a relevant labor market involving relative worth. To guide deliberations about the choice of either a point or average perspective, contextual information about a target school district is need.

Based on the advice of superintendents, school boards must consider current as well as future needs of their district in light of staffing demands for teachers. A priority must be established relative to recruitment or retention. Recruitment involves attracting new teachers to the district, while retention involves retaining those employed.

If a school board decides that staffing needs can be best satisfied by recruiting new teachers to their school district, then a point estimate should be used as a means for defining absolute worth of teacher salaries. Once this decision is made, choices of a relevant labor market are inconsequential from a cost efficiency criterion. That is, all relevant labor markets as assessed yield similar cost.

On the other hand, if a school board determines on the advice of a superintendent that retention is more important than recruitment for an object school district, then other parameters are suggested. For the absolute value of teacher salaries, current data indicate that an average cost perspective is superior to a point estimate. Also, these same data indicated from a school board's perspective, the most favorable relevant labor market is one defined by geographical proximity, while the least favorable relevant labor market is one defined by ability to pay.

Finally, this manuscript addresses an uncharted but important area that school board members must navigate based on the advice of their superintendent. As such, these suggestions should be viewed with caution because other unique factors to a particular school district may well be controlling and beyond those reported in this article. However, until other studies are conducted, these results provide superintendents with a reservoir of information that they should share in guiding their boards of education within the salary determination process for teachers.

### Author Biography

Dr. I. Phillip Young is professor of education at the University of California at Davis, co-director of the joint doctoral program in educational leadership between the University of California System and the California State University System, and co-director of the University of California Educational Research Center. In the past year, Dr. Young has authored and co-authored numerous articles that have been published in *Educational Research Quarterly*, *Journal of School Leadership*, *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *Personnel Evaluation in Education*, and *Educational Administration Quarterly*. He is also the author of the book, *The Human Resource Function in Educational Administration*, also published last year.

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## Article of Best Practice

# Empowering Teams for Decision-Making

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## The Mandate

The issues of teacher empowerment and decentralized management have been a part of the educational reform agenda for decades (Wohlsetter, Smyer, & Morhrman, 1994). Recent legislation has required that leadership teams have teacher, support staff, and parent representation, and possibly student representation. Principals receive specific instructions from their Boards of Education as to how the teams are to be chosen. Yet, they have had little training or guidance as to how to lead these teams. We, the authors, have been successful high school principals for a total of sixteen years. Our purpose is to share our insights, supported by research, which enabled us to work successfully in leading leadership teams to make sound decisions for our schools.

### *Instructionally Effective Schools*

State and national studies have found that instructionally effective public schools most often operate through, (a) internal, shared governance, (b) locally planned professional development and staffing, (c) school selected

educational programs, materials and curriculum, (d) self-determined vision, expectations, and assessments of student learning, (e) shared partnerships with parents, communities and the business sector, and (f) school determined control of site-based resources and school-based budgeting (Glickman, 1999). Yet, how does a principal empower the team to make these crucial decisions that determine the future of the school?

### *Establishing the Vision*

The first step toward team empowerment is for the principal to have a clear vision of where he or she wants the school to go. Covey (1989) suggested that a leader should begin with the end in mind. While a principal may have a generalized idea of that goal, we found that it was useful to write down our visions for our schools. It clarified our thoughts and gave us talking points to discuss with our leadership teams. When we articulated our personal goals of increased academic achievement, decreased

dropouts, and decreased discipline referrals, we had the basis for discussions about what we valued and where we were going.

Those discussions were not always comfortable because teachers working on the front lines can become disillusioned about the tough job they face; however, those discussions were necessary. Dufour and Eaker (1998) pointed out that vision must be based on shared values. The values have to be explored, clarified, and revisited to build a team that moves the school toward the vision.

### *Verifying the Mission*

Most schools have a mission statement, and most teachers (and maybe principals) do not know what it is. The important thing is not to have a mission statement, but *to go through the process* of writing, re-writing, or verifying the mission. The mission must belong to a particular group of people. They must agree together about the work that must be accomplished to reach the vision. Neither of the authors started out having our leadership teams draft mission statements, but we found out that when we did, the activity solidified the faculty. The mission was published and posted in our schools. We asked our teachers to undertake the same procedure with their classes. Not all of them did, but those who did reported that the posted class mission was frequently used to remind students why they were in the class and what work needed to be done. This technique works with both the students and faculty in a school.

### *Belonging to the Team*

There is a great sense of purpose that develops among an energized team that has the power to make real decisions. That team can become the catalyst that shares its enthusiasm throughout the school.

What makes a good school ... is a feeling shared by the entire staff

that... their school belongs to them ... This feeling only forms when a particular school community is given the freedom and authority to try what they believe is best for their students (Manna, 1999, p. 7).

When our leadership teams were given the authority to plan the staff development for the school for the coming year, both teams decided to utilize talent within our own faculties rather than bringing in consultants. The results were excellent professional development sessions that required much more time and energy from the leadership team, but the results were also better received than suggestions made by some of the paid consultants. We as principals learned to listen to our team and the team learned to hear what the full staff was saying.

### *Individuals Influenced by Decisions Make the Decisions*

That the people who will be affected by decisions should be the ones making them sounds so simplistic that one might think it does not bear mentioning. However, anyone who has been in the school business very long knows that this is not always what happens. With the political reality of federal, state, and local mandates and policies, sometimes it is the person at the end of the line, the teacher, who has the least say-so in how business is done. Principals have to guard against replicating that same chain of control in their own schools. Leadership teams have to be reminded that they too must listen to their fellow staff members. The team may be so committed to improving important standardized test scores that they decide that everyone has to give up their planning time to tutor students. Although this may be a sound and workable idea, unless it is sold to the faculty it may bring so much dissension in the school that the good cause gets lost in the question of who is making the decisions about whose time.

### *Appropriate information available to those making the decisions*

A dominant aspect missing from the site-based management movement has been the availability of appropriate and adequate data to guide and support site-based decisions. Data provided to school systems typically have followed a format of district comparisons or state comparisons. Individual schools receive site-specific data following a format of standardized testing results and available demographic information. When appropriate data are provided, the skill of interpretation and the training to use the data in strategy development are severely deficient or missing completely.

We as successful principals had to become schooled in securing and interpreting our own data to be able to lead our leadership teams in how to deal with these data. We learned to call on key people at the district and state levels to help us understand our data so that we could help our staffs understand the data. We also learned that it was necessary to schedule in time for the leadership team to deal with the data. Such an important job cannot be done in forty-five minutes in an after-school meeting.

### *Information Becomes Knowledge*

The argument for appropriate information is strengthened in Lawler's (1986) work with organizational management. He developed a model to view the potential effectiveness of any participative decision making. The model indicates that effectiveness of participative decision making is a product of information, knowledge, power, and rewards. Empowering decision-making without knowledge, information, and rewards is likely to lead to poor decisions.

Information is often no more than the results of standardized tests that allow the

ranking of students, classes, schools, systems, and even states. Knowledge occurs from understanding the indicators of success and from the assessment of targeted weaknesses. A leadership team might look at standardized test results, grades at determined intervals, sub group performances, demographics of students, and attendance and tardy data, to name a few data sources. The question is "how do these artifacts of information become sources of knowledge?" First, the data must be authenticated to establish a sound working base. Consider how many times in recent years, data have been sent to the school sites that had to be withdrawn or revised because of a mistake on someone's part. Secondly, the decision makers must assess the information as to its relevance and meaning. Data should be analyzed for trends rather than in isolation. If the leaders of the school are not looking at their test results, demographics, or any other kind of information within an historical perspective, they are really not in a position to lead the school.

### *Decision Makers Held Accountable for Their Decisions*

Who should set the standards of accountability? Should they be set by government entities, professional organizations, or should each school set its own accountability standards? Gaines and Cornett (1992) suggest that each school should set its own standards because the individual school is closest to its clientele. We who live in the real world know that it is not likely to happen. The political reality of media coverage and government overseeing makes it obvious that the move is toward centralization of accountability, not away from it. Under the *No Child Left Behind* law that went into effect in 2003-2004, Title I schools are the only ones currently sanctioned, but all schools must amend their school improvement plans to indicate how they will improve, and all schools must meet the "Highly Qualified" teacher

standards, reporting their success toward Adequate Yearly Progress to parents and the public. We at the school level are accountable to every level of government for the decisions we make.

Certainly, the school is accountable for the decisions it makes, but the most accountable person is the principal and right behind her or him is the school leadership team. It is a sobering thought that one's decisions may come under public scrutiny, but that is the reality of public education. Thus a wise principal will do everything in his or her power to empower the leadership team to know how

to make good decisions that will improve the school. We believe that we were successful principals because we had a clear vision where we wanted to school to go. We used discussions of that vision to establish the mission of the school. Finally, we gave our leadership teams good information and we gave them the time and tools to convert that information into knowledge. We did not make decisions in haste and we learned to hear from all stakeholders before we moved forward. Both of the schools we led improved in almost every measurable category during our tenure. That does not happen by chance, but by plan.

### Author Biographies

Dr. Douglas Eury is an associate professor in the School of Education at Gardner-Webb University where he also serves as coordinator of doctoral studies. His experience includes 33 years of service as a public educator in the state of North Carolina. He spent seventeen years as a classroom teacher and coach; the remainder of his tenure consisted of administrative experience at the secondary level serving as assistant principal for administration, assistant principal for curriculum and principal of three high schools.

Dr. Vicky Ratchford spent the first half of her career as an English teacher. After earning a masters degree in curriculum, she entered school administration, serving as a high school assistant principal for several years. She has also worked as curriculum director at the middle and high school levels and as a high school principal. She has presented several workshops on improving student composition, and recently published "Helping Teachers Respond to Student Writing" in the *North Carolina English Teachers' Journal*. She is currently teaching in the masters and doctoral school administration programs at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina.



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[Article of Best Practice](#)

## Improving Skiing: A Metaphor for Improving Leadership

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**M**etaphors are powerful in describing organizations (Morgan, 1986; 1998) and stories reveal the meaning of our experiences (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). As an avid skier and school change leader, I have drawn on my personal experiences and the literature to develop the idea of improving skiing as a metaphor for improving leadership, particularly focusing on the constructs of credibility and emotional intelligence.

### *Getting “Fit” to Ski and Lead Change*

Similar to skiers getting fit, leaders must get “fit” in order to lead change in their organizations. “Surviving and thriving in the face of constant change has much in common with sports. There are rules, training regimens, mental conditioning, [and] goal setting” (Conner 1998, p. 37). A leader prepares for change by understanding the change process, both personally and as it relates to members of the organization (Calabrese, 2002).

Another fitness necessity for skiers and leaders is to have the right equipment, including carrying a map. “Without better maps, it is extremely unlikely that organizational change efforts will ever sustain themselves” (Senge et al., 1999, p. 5). The best way to arrive safely at the bottom of ski slopes is to follow the trail map. Similarly in

organizations, in order to establish a psychologically safe environment “the leader provides a map as to what needs to be done and how it is to be done” (Schein, as cited in Calabrese, 2002, p. 146).

Regarding safety, although many people believe that skiing is dangerous, it merely requires a good sense of balance, alertness, and a willingness to take acceptable risks. Likewise in organizations, “by correctly anticipating what is going to happen, ...this sense of preparedness is fundamental to securing dynamic balance” (Conner, 1998, p. 35). Just as athletes’ competitiveness results in encouraging and driving one another when skiing, peer pressure in schools coupled with peer support is also an effective driver (Fullan, 2001).

### *Credibility and Emotional Intelligence Foster Skiing and Leadership Improvement*

Many amateur skiers’ techniques have developed by collecting tips from ski magazines and by trying to emulate expert skiers on the slopes. “Whatever the skill, watching those who do it well is extraordinarily useful” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 86). A catalyst to successfully implementing change in one’s personal life or in organizations is to admit that there is a need to change and to know oneself, one’s strengths, and weaknesses (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Kouzes

& Posner, 1993). Moreover, the *primal* or most important skill of leadership is “*emotional intelligence*: how leaders handle themselves and their relationships” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 6). Similarly, *credibility*, “consistency between words and deeds” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 47) is the foundation of leadership, because credible leaders discover their “credo [values], competence, and confidence” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 52).

During a recent ski trip, my husband and I were certainly ready to admit that we needed to improve our skiing by taking a ski lesson. Likewise, one of the personal challenges of being a leader is to expose one’s vulnerabilities by becoming a learner (Dotlich & Cairo, 2002).

### *The Ski Lesson*

“*Great athletes spend a lot of time practicing and a little time performing, while executives spend no time practicing and all of their time performing*” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 157).

After observing my husband and me ski for approximately 20 yards, the instructor was able to pinpoint our weaknesses including my two turning issues – lifting my uphill ski and moving my hips rather than my knees. After demonstrating a number of strategies for reforming our ski techniques, he began reinforcing our efforts at change.

Ski lesson pupils and leaders, intent on improving their performance, should interpret critical responses to their actions not as personal attacks but as indicators of whether they have met role expectations (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Moreover, as a leader, “knowing and valuing yourself, distinct from the roles you play, you gain the freedom to take risks within those roles” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 198). To correct my ski technique

problems, I understood that I would have to ski out of my comfort zone and take some risks.

Many leaders face an entirely different risk that impacts their ability to change: lack of feedback. They are victims of *CEO disease*, in that frank feedback on their performance is often withheld, because subordinates either fear them or want to please them by sharing only positive information (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). “Women, in general, get even less useful feedback on their performance in any position – as a leader or otherwise – than do men” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, pp. 93-94). Fortunately, our ski instructor did not allow my gender to deter him from describing my weaknesses as a skier. On the other hand, as a former principal and superintendent, I suspect that my subordinates occasionally withheld negative information from me. However, leaders need to welcome both positive and negative feedback in order to grow and become more effective (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

An initial step to improvement was to believe that I was capable of changing my skiing style. People, with high self-efficacy, motivate and challenge themselves and direct their actions by visualizing success (Bandura, 1997; Paglis & Green, 2002). Similarly, those with an internal locus of control are more proactive and exhibit more risk taking behaviors (Marcinkiewicz, 1993/1994; Miller, Kets de Vries, & Toulouse, 1982). Therefore, skiers and leaders alike are more likely to motivate themselves to take risks in new situations if they have high self-efficacy and locus of control. Because “anyone who has the will and motivation can get better at leading once he understands the steps” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 101; Kouzes & Posner, 1993), I needed to establish a plan for undoing old skiing habits and learning new techniques; with the steps toward improvement broken down into subskills.

### *Undoing Old Habits*

Because I seldom fall when I ski, I admit to displaying some smugness regarding my ski prowess. However, I surmise that my not falling also indicates that I have never tried to improve my technique. Conner (1998) warned leaders to “stop being enamored with your won achievements – complacency and arrogance inhibit your ability to develop new expectations” (p. 215). Therefore, as I practiced my new skiing techniques, I needed to guard against a cognitive bias held by managers that affects their learning; escalation of commitment (Jones, 2004). This bias leads them to remain “committed to a losing course of action ... refusing to admit making a mistake” (Jones, 2004, p. 389). Furthermore, Collins’ advice to organizational leaders also applied to my skiing in that I needed to “start with an honest and diligent effort to determine the truth of [my] situation [and engage in] an honest confrontation of the brutal facts” (1998, p. 88). The brutal fact was that I did not ski well.

Whether learning to be a better skier or learning to be a better leader, “these new lessons fight an uphill battle against the ingrained patterns the brain already has in place” in order to replace old habits with new ones that work better (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 104). Because habituated practices of both skiing and leadership are unconscious, they do not disappear immediately. Instead “it takes commitment and constant reminders to stay focused on undoing those habits” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 143). As one might expect, initially my skiing got worse, because “the new way of thinking, feeling, or acting feels unnatural at first” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 157). Instead of confidently traversing the slopes, I was self-consciously intent on remembering all the aspects of practicing my new skills. Similarly, when leading change in schools, (Fullan, 2001) described the inevitable

*implementation dip* as “literally a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings” ((Fullan, 2001, pp. 40-41). Moreover, a supportive environment is necessary for change to happen, because “when people feel stressed...they no longer feel safe and are further inhibited in practicing new ways of acting. Instead, they become defensive, relying on their most familiar habits” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 163). True to the literature, practicing my new ski techniques on a steeper slope was very stressful and, feeling unsafe, I quickly reverted to my old habits!

### *Practicing the New Skills*

Skiers and educational leaders can improve their practice by becoming aware of their bad habits and practicing the new skill frequently until the behavior is mastered (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Practice in new skill development is aided by imitating those who have mastered the fundamental competencies. Our ski instructor always demonstrated the correct technique, gave us feedback on our performance, and kept us on ski slopes that were steep enough to motivate us, but not so difficult as to discourage us or destroy our self-confidence.

The instructor’s actions seemed consistent with the literature in that not only does feedback build confidence, but also “people’s motivation to improve their productivity on a task increases only when they have a challenging goal and receive feedback on their progress” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 172). Most sports enthusiasts have read of athletes, including expert skiers, who credit their accomplishments to their ability to visualize success. Success in leadership also depends on one’s power to picture or focus on

the achievement of goals (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

### *New Metaphors for Organizations*

Because metaphors can impact our understanding of organizations, striving for success in the future may also require us to think about our school organizations and their leadership in new ways rather than “forcing their human qualities into a background role” (Morgan, 1986, p. 13; 1998). Although historical power relations may make it difficult, by envisioning different metaphors, people can change their organizations (Morgan, 1986; 1998). The preceding skiing metaphor was an attempt to portray a metaphor for improving leadership, characterized by emotional intelligence and credibility. The premise was that in order to be “fit” to lead change in their

organizations; leaders must first look within to determine whether or not they are prepared for the task. Emotionally intelligent leaders intentionally strive to improve their skills through “effort, motivation, and an emotional commitment” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 102). Credible leaders know that “leadership is a set of skills and practices that can be learned regardless of whether or not one is in a formal management position” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 156). Therefore, credible leaders build leadership capacity in others by empowering or “freeing [them] to use the power and skills they already have” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 157). Consequently, “our concept of leadership [is extended] to include those on the front lines as well as those in the executive suites” (Kouzes & Posner, 2000, p. 21).

### Author Biography

Before joining Bowling Green State University as assistant professor in Educational Administration and Leadership Studies, Dr. Zimmerman held K-12 leadership positions as a superintendent and principal. Her research interest is organizational change, about which she has written articles and made presentations. Dr. Zimmerman has recently been published in *Educational Research Service Spectrum*, *American Secondary Education*, and *The School Administrator*. In addition, her article entitled “Are Weapons Searches in the Job Descriptions of Instructional Leaders?” was selected for the Spring 2005 volume of the AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice.

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